



Recommendations for Live Performance Pay and Professional Protections For Working Musicians

A living, evolving resource for Arts Funders and
Organizations that support ethical treatment of Artists

We encourage workshopping, feedback, active discussion and evaluation
based on data and rigorous surveys and focus groups.

WHIPPOORWILL ARTS

In partnership with the Center for Music Ecosystems and 4A Arts





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Short on Time? Read this:

Paying musicians for all opportunities benefits everyone across the ecosystem, including audiences, venue staff, and businesses. Live music performance is labor and musicians should be paid, not asked to play for free or exposure. Data collection, collaboration, and open conversation can help guide this industry-wide shift incrementally. We recommend the following guidelines to support working musicians and reimagine the arts ecosystem:

Ethical Pay

- Ensure all musicians are fairly compensated, in alignment with local cost of living
- Develop a guaranteed ethical pay scale offering transparency and clarity to musicians
- Factor in performance-related expenses musicians incur while determining compensation
- Expand funding for traditional and non-traditional listening venues as paid performance opportunities

Professional Protections

- Advocate for gig workers in the music economy to gain easier access to existing social safety nets, including unemployment benefits, worker's compensation, parental leave, healthcare, etc.
- Take simple, effective measures to establish and protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of hired artists
- Hire an access coordinator or designate a staff member to act as a "point person" accountable for ensuring artists' accessibility needs
- Implement equity booking and publicly commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion growth. Collect measurable data to understand and improve collective efforts towards inclusion
- Connect musicians to materially empowering resources such as direct-to-artist grants

Minimum Hourly Base Rate, per Musician	\$125
Experience	Emerging (N/A)
	Experienced (+10%)
	Professional (+25%)
Consideration	Increased Pay Rate
Band leader or soloist	Base Pay +25%
Special occasion or large capacity venue	Base Pay +100%
Wedding reception	Base Pay +200%
Outdoor event	Base Pay +100%
Overtime	Base Pay +100%, calculated in 15-minute increments
After midnight	Base Pay +50%

Sample Expenses Rate Card

Expenses	Average Rate
Mileage	\$0.65 per mile traveled (to and from)*
Food and Drink	\$50 per diem per band member
Accommodation (if required)	\$160 per room required
Porterage or Cabotage	On request
Waiting Time Not Covered By Fee	\$55 per hour, per member

* Based on current IRS standard mileage rate; subject to change

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Introduction

“Musicians have spoken, who will listen?”

About Whippoorwill Arts

Whippoorwill Arts is a musician-centered nonprofit concerned with a thriving live music ecosystem. How does music touch your life, what does it mean to you to be in a room with an artist whose lyrics, music, tone, rhythm move you to dance, laugh, cry? Yet, the current ecosystem is both inequitable and financially unsustainable for the majority of working musicians who spend their lives honing their craft to bring it to you. (By “working musicians,” we mean professionals excluding the top 10% of earners.) We are concerned about the loss of livelihood for the musicians who perform at smaller venues, teach in their communities, bring music to those who are isolated and for whom traditional venues are inaccessible, musicians who cannot afford to play for free or “exposure.” If they cannot make it, will we be left in the extreme with commercial music in arenas or bars for our live music experiences?

In 2020, we embarked on multi-phase research efforts with the following guiding questions in mind:

How can we best help the majority of working musicians left out of the financial rewards of the current music ecosystem? Given declining income streams, how can we imagine new sources of income and advocate for ecosystem pay reform?

We tackled these questions working together with musicians from diverse backgrounds, music fans and presenters, arts/music funders, professional membership organizations, union organizers and activists, and scientists and researchers. Ours has been a broadly collaborative project incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion as

means toward increased community support, a greater degree of dignity, and ultimately, a stronger sense of belonging.

We began by asking musicians of all levels and career stages about their needs and experiences. The one thousand two hundred and thirty four musicians who participated in our national survey, four focus groups, and later working groups shared that their top needs to survive and thrive are: **guaranteed pay, cost considerations, and professional protections**. In addition, they stated a strong wish for **more opportunities to play for small listening audiences**.

As we dove deeper, our investigation revealed a number of foundational recommendations and case studies of organizations already making improvements in these areas. In this report, we share what we discovered and provide informed, firsthand recommendations on how our common objectives can be met.

We start with the foundational premise that it genuinely benefits all businesses to improve the health and livelihoods of workers, and doing so inevitably also benefits and increases the availability of live music. Navigating the financial realities of buyers or the prospective and market values of each purchase is, at times, daunting, but also presents opportunities. Our case studies illustrate several concrete ways to achieve these shared goals.

This is Version 1.0 of the Guidelines, a living document that we will continue to revisit, workshop and revise with allies and community partners as needed over time. So we encourage you to share your feedback as well through this [short survey](#). Whippoorwill Arts is available, and eager to work with organizations one-on-one to plan ways to transform their practices and relationships with working musicians - so we all benefit.

Let's do this together!

The Whippoorwill Arts Team

Our Research Approach

To date, we have conducted research in four phases over a 2 year period. The primary focus of all phases is to help nurture live music in the United States, and in doing so, support the livelihood and health of working musicians who bring music to our communities, large and small.

Phase 1: Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future (2021)

Whippoorwill Arts commissioned a landmark survey of working musicians conducted with research firm Slover Linnett, and the support of many music genre service organizations who helped reach a range of musicians across the music landscape. In Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future (2021), musicians identified what they need to not just survive, but to thrive.

Central Findings: Musicians Need Change

Our landmark survey of working musicians identified three core needs to address ecosystem-wide concerns and support working musicians. They are:

1. Guaranteed pay (i.e. not tied to ticket or alcohol sales) and professional protections (e.g. from discrimination and harassment)
2. Consideration of the cost of performing and touring (e.g. gas, travel, lodging, equipment)
3. More opportunities to perform live for small, listening audiences

Phase 2: Music As A Social Good (2022)

Whippoorwill Arts partnered with the Center for Music Ecosystems and 4AArts on Music As A Social Good, a study that establishes how music benefits health, education, wealth creation, inclusion, and community development.

Central Framework: Live Music's Role in Community

Live music spiritually anchors communities as one of humanity's oldest shared rituals. It provides opportunities for healing, mourning, comfort, and salvation, creating sacred spaces to channel public expression. Live music plays a role in communal memory and storytelling, and it emerges as a vital tool for communication between communities and across cultures.

“Music in New Orleans healed ethnic tensions within the city and brought stability to a weak economy, and in a city so often cast aside as a center of corruption, music provides a vital force of healing and education.”

- Julia Silver, Louisiana Folklife

Music is a necessary spiritual medicine and social good. Music interventions have been proven to improve language skills and comprehension; combat antisocial behavior and aggression; augment mental capacity and memory; as well as reduce the risk of early onset dementia. Musicians are healers, cultural practitioners and preservers, and cultivators of public space. Our communities and cultures, our physical and emotional well-being, and our businesses thrive off the labor of musicians. They also suffer when musicians cannot make ends meet because of limited opportunities to find stable, sustainable, and meaningful work. For example, Austin Music Census' 2022 survey of musicians found that 38% of respondents struggle to afford housing and a third of respondents are considering leaving the Austin area due to the prohibitive cost of living. As

more musicians move further away from work opportunities often concentrated near venues in downtown areas, fewer young people are entering the music industry. ([Source: Music As A Social Good](#)).

Phase 3: [Music Industry Primer: A Gap Analysis \(2022\)](#)

Furthering our successful partnership with the Center of Music Ecosystems and 4AArts, the [Music Industry Primer](#) assesses the economic impact of the commercial music industry, explains revenue streams available to performing musicians, identifies income inequalities, regional and local differences that often skew our understanding of the music labor market, and gaps in data available for study.

Central Issues: [Music Market Data Reveals Inequity](#)

The music industry is a complex ecosystem with different pay scales depending on context, geography and circumstance. **Commercial music industry data only measures a fraction of the music labor marketplace.** To fully understand and appreciate current market and working conditions for music workers and job providers, we must take an expansive view of live music, including what music workers are reporting, and accounting for regional and local pay inequities.

Phase 4: [Live Pay and Professional Protections Recommendations \(2023\)](#)

Now, in our latest research phase, Whippoorwill Arts has partnered with the Center for Music Ecosystems and 4AArts, and an [Advisory Committee of Music Professionals](#) to enunciate recommendations informed by the first three phases of inquiry and investigation. The fourth phase intends to provide useful information and

practical action steps to community developers, arts funders, service organizations, presenters, and music industry leaders so we can work together to improve working conditions for musicians, and ultimately shape a more equitable and sustainable ecosystem for everyone.

Central Solutions: [Ways Forward](#)

To meet priorities identified in earlier phases, this document provides additional insights, analysis, and transformative ideas to forge **stronger relationships between arts organizations and working musicians.** We explore different pathways and structures, both in the United States and abroad, related to paid and non-paid working conditions in an earnest attempt to meet organizations where they are, in the many ways they operate, and collaborate to chart a more equitable path forward. Our target audience includes those engaged with, or who work at, arts organizations that fund and support the work and employment of musicians.

The fourth phase intends to provide useful information and practical action steps so we can work together to improve working conditions for musicians, and ultimately shape a more equitable and sustainable ecosystem for everyone.

Our Intentions

This report focuses on live music in any context - whether in a classroom, with a group of senior care residents, at a prison, online via Zoom, or any other circumstance where music is performed in front of an audience. A thriving live music ecosystem relies on working musicians and they need guaranteed pay to sustain their creative work.

The findings are offered with deeply collaborative intent, as a tool to foster conversation across silos running through the music industry. We are committed to working with and learning from any organization or person sharing two core values: our society needs live music, and performing music live is labor and deserves to be compensated. **We can make the music ecosystem a more supportive place for working musicians through collective effort.**

But to do so, we must lead with a singular premise unifying this work - across all conditions, events, engagements, or structures, all musicians must be guaranteed pay when performing live (which includes live streaming).

Definition: Live Music Sectors

For the purpose of analysis, live music has been divided into three sectors:

- 1. Commercial Sector:** This is what most think of when they say “music industry.” It is focused on commercial and popular music and centers for-profit businesses (Technically, the industry is all of this, but in common parlance, the music industry and commercial music industry are synonymous.)
- 2. Non-profit Sector:** Private nonprofits and foundations (e.g. from the small independent local arts organizations to the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York) and local government-owned music venues that hire musicians regularly, have their own infrastructure (booking agents, conferences like APAP, funding mechanisms, etc), and operate differently enough from the commercial music segment to be treated separately.

Musicians, especially in roots music, work both segments, but working conditions and employment practices are distinct, often dissimilar in the nonprofit world.

- 3. Third Sector:** Performances for typically underserved audiences who want regular, high-quality live music to build community, educate, and even heal. These include but are not limited to elder care centers, rehab programs, detention centers, public K-12 schools, services for disabled people, at-risk youth programs, and so on. The need and growth in this area is limitless. In addition, the third sector also includes house concerts and privately booked gigs such as weddings, sporting events and corporate entertainment.

This report focuses on expanding, understanding and better equipping musicians and arts organizations with the opportunities Of course, **musicians may negotiate higher or referenced above as nonprofit and ‘third sector’.** It envisions creative ways for funders to engage ethically with the music economy by cultivating live music as a viable source of income for working musicians. It also responds to survey findings that **84% of musicians are seeking more grants for financial support from nonprofits and third sector organizations.**

Consequently, this work is directed at the intersecting nonprofit and third sectors, not the commercial industry. Musicians often perform across the two – for example, in a school classroom one afternoon and at a nonprofit community festival the next. Communicating with nonprofits engaged in similar work, as well as the entities funding them, is a streamlined way to leverage limited resources and data collection efforts. We are part of a shifting tide within the music economy seeking to protect the health, safety, and livelihoods of creative and cultural workers. The case studies in this report outline a few of the out-of-the-box solutions that organizations are implementing to reimagine dynamics of pay and professional protections in the music economy.

Our overarching themes, supported by the rest of this report, are as follows:

- Everyone benefits when musicians receive guaranteed, stable pay
- Ending ‘pay to play’ in all iterations improves the wider ecosystem
- Direct-to-artist grants materially empower musicians and build community trust
- With arts funder support (from all sources private, foundations, government) and creative collaborations we can strengthen the nonprofit and third sectors, and there is room to increase and improve paid opportunities for musicians in those sectors

What You Will Find in This Report

According to our first study “[Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future](#),” musicians are reducing the hours they spend performing in the labor force. We have attempted to address this flight from music that hurts not only musicians but also ripples out to communities, venues and all aspects of the music ecosystem, in these ways:

- **Insights from Structured Research:** We have interviewed a number of musicians and experts and shared key insights from them in an [appendix](#)
- **Practical, Inspirational Case Studies:** We have compiled a number of case studies, both in the United States and abroad, exploring different pay scales (be they via unions, orchestras, universal basic income schemes or specific festival, venue or nonprofit honorariums and payment schemes)
- **Implementable Minimum Pay Scales:** We have developed a number of pay considerations and set amounts (to be seen as a minimum), based on different kinds of performance opportunities
- **Improvements in Working Conditions:** We have compiled a series of unpaid considerations to improve working conditions and support diversity and equity in hiring and supporting musicians in their work environments

Key Findings

This report outlines two primary types of recommendations as follows. Our most critical recommendations for **ethical pay** are:

1. Ensure all musicians are fairly compensated
2. Develop a guaranteed ethical pay scale offering transparency and clarity to musicians
3. Factor in performance-related expenses musicians incur while determining appropriate compensation
4. Expand the field: Reimagine and expand funding for traditional and non-traditional listening venues as paid performance opportunities for musicians

Our most critical recommendations for **professional protections** are:

1. Advocate for musicians in the economy to gain easier access to existing safety nets and support services, including unemployment benefits, worker’s compensation, parental leave, healthcare, etc.
2. Take simple, effective measures to establish and protect the physical and emotional safety of hired artists
3. Hire an access coordinator or designate a staff member to act as a “point person” accountable for ensuring artists’ accessibility needs
4. Implement equity booking and publicly commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion growth. Collect measurable data to understand and improve collective efforts towards inclusion
5. Connect musicians to materially empowering resources such as direct-to-artist grants and create pathways to respond to instances of discomfort, discrimination, or harassment

The next sections explore these recommendations in detail, and provide real life examples of organizations already taking action, and the positive impact of their decisions.

Ethical Pay Recommendations

Establishing more equitable pay guidelines creates better working and living conditions for musicians who rely on live performance as a primary income generator. These guidelines are aimed at all organizations who hire musicians across the nonprofit and third sector. Further, we bolster these recommendations with pay scales that provide further insight on how entities can meet these guidelines.

The entire live music ecosystem benefits when performers receive guaranteed, stable pay. Live music engages diverse audiences to create business opportunities and cultivate community. Paying musicians can actually support and enlarge bottom lines, and the challenges within shifting business practices also present opportunities. The case studies demonstrate this through their reimagining of live music events, modeling ethical pay for musicians.

Pay Guidelines

- **Recommendation 1:** Ensure all musicians are paid or a framework is adopted for donating time
[Case Study: Northwest Folklife](#)
- **Recommendation 2:** Explore pay scales across the nonprofit and third sector - this will create more performance opportunities
[Case Studies: Music Export Memphis](#) and [Bohemian Foundation Music Events](#)
- **Recommendation 3:** Understanding expenses & promoting professionalization
[Case Study: Independent Musicians Alliance & Jazz in the Neighborhood](#)
- **Recommendation 4:** Expand the field to create more performance opportunities
[Case Studies: Whippoorwill Arts; Sound Affects](#) and [Springboard for the Arts UBI Scheme](#)

Recommendation 1: Ensure all musicians are compensated

Playing for free must end. Live music is labor, and musicians' labor must be compensated. All live performances should provide guaranteed pay to the musicians, including performance settings where musicians have historically been expected to play for free. We encourage arts organizations to recognize situations where artists are working without pay and adopt new, more equitable frameworks to compensate musicians for their work.

Asking musicians to play for "exposure" is exploitive, disrespectful, and unfair. Research reveals this antiquated practice undermines the market for musicians, as explored in Part 1 [Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future](#).

"I hope other musicians will say no to playing for exposure so we can all find the respect we deserve."

- Working musician, *Turn Up the Mic*

Often, conversations about artist pay lack a clear framework that explains the value of paying musicians. We initiate this conversation with a deep willingness to understand constraints and offer workable solutions and approaches for budget reallocation that benefit the whole ecosystem - audiences, businesses & presenters, and musicians alike.

CASE STUDY

Northwest Folklife

Northwest Folklife is an independent 501(c)(3) arts organization that has celebrated the multigenerational arts, cultures, and traditions of a global Pacific Northwest since 1971. Their work centers on preserving cultural arts, bridging connections to heritage and identity, and cultivating the ever-evolving traditions of the Pacific Northwest. They are for the people, by the people. Northwest Folklife grows alongside the greater community by collaborating with local cultural organizations and culture bearers to ensure communities have agency and voice in the representation of their communities. Their year-round programming is produced in collaboration with Community Coordinators - artists, educators, culture bearers, and leaders throughout the region - and powered by contributions from community members, corporations, foundations, and the public.

Pay Considerations: In 2022, Northwest Folklife modeled change by paying honorariums to all performing artists, independent of ticket sales, after historical operations as a non-paying folk festival. At SuperFolk! 2022, artists **received cash compensation at \$2000 per ensemble**. Payment was conceived within an “All Favored Nations” framework - each act received the same performance contract.

Northwest Folklife is piloting a payment strategy **in partnership with city government, private sponsorship, and individual donations** that will allow them to expand compensation options. They also recently restructured the “Our Big Neighborhood” program to work directly with businesses and venues to ensure compensation for all participating artists through partnerships and grants. Accessibility is a key consideration for Northwest Folklife, and most festivals are free / ticketless, although ticket sales do account for some budgeting.

This case study demonstrates that models for paying musicians can be adopted incrementally, and in partnership with venues, private foundations, corporations, and local governments. It is feasible to shift the long-standing practices of an organization towards paying musicians a fair wage.

We aim to shift expectations to playing for payment, rather than exposure. As a step in this direction, we must improve assumptions, expectations, and practices. First, rather than request donated time, we recommend that an organization pay musicians and if the musician chooses, they can donate it back in part or full, or make a contribution to a musician-centered organization. For larger organizations that program conferences and offer exposure in the nonprofit sector, we recommend they commission audience surveys to determine a measurable benefit of exposure for artists’ livelihoods.

Questions include, but are not limited to:

- How much does it cost musicians to participate?
- How many bookings and how much did they earn annually from supporters who met them at the event?
- How many bookings are paid opportunities?
- How did the musicians feel about the performance, including the format?
- What is the value of work generated as a result of event/conference opportunities?

Establishing a clearer understanding, developed over a few years that assesses successes, challenges and transaction value would provide a deeper framework to explain the benefits of the exposure on offer and ensure informed decisions are being made by all parties to maximize the likelihood of success.

We have outlined a suite of pay scales and rate cards researched across the sector. Evidence suggests these scales can help increase performance opportunities and reduce, if not eliminate the argument that playing for exposure need not mean musicians are paid. This is outlined in Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: Utilize transparent scales that ensure fair pay

The current methods and calculations used to determine what a musician gets paid for performances in the current music marketplace are rarely transparent and, for the most part, remain subjective. Transparency is essential to improve and increase fairness. In a survey from 2021, Music Export Memphis found the **most frequent answer to hourly pay rate was \$100**, but many musicians indicated this rate has remained unchanged for decades since many of them began performing, as early as 1970. Adjusted for inflation, 1970s \$100 would be nearly \$800 an hour in 2023.

We recommend paying an hourly rate, instead of a per-performance fee, such as a minimum ethical base pay rate for musicians of \$125 per hour per musician.

In order to establish this minimum baseline for performance rates, we compiled a variety of wage scales, tariffs of fees, festival promotions, and other sources already in place and being used. To ensure consistency, all rates published prior to 2023 have been adjusted to reflect inflation, via the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [CPI Inflation Calculator](#). All foreign currencies have been converted into U.S. dollars, at the currency rate at the time of the original rate's publication.

These rates provide a foundation upon which a more equitable wage scale can be built, including **payment per actual performance time**, in addition to a fee schedule that **prevents musicians from paying out-of-pocket for unavoidable costs** that accompany performances, from travel to equipment expenses including meals and downtime.

We have witnessed a historic economic devaluation of the musical arts in the past few decades. A 2021 study by [Music Export Memphis](#) found that many musicians have been paid at the same \$100/hr rate since the 1970s. Our recommendations align themselves closely with organizations leading the way in offering best practice payment solutions for music workers. Our recommended ethical base rate was established based on averages established across the industry in the past decade, comparing variables as closely as possible. Of course, musicians may negotiate higher or negotiate lower rates in alignment with local standards.

Recommended Minimum Hourly Base Rate

Whippoorwill Arts recommends a minimum base pay rate for musicians of \$125 per hour, per performer. This does not reflect the broad considerations in which musicians expect higher rates, such as type of venue, local cost of living, etc. This minimum base rate applies to a beginner ensemble performer scheduled for a casual indoor event at a small venue with existing sound and lighting equipment within a reasonable commute for the musician.

We also strongly recommend an **hourly pay rate** for musicians. Many existing wage scales calculate musicians' pay per performance, and not hourly. Data analysis reveals that per-performance rates are typically lower than hourly rates, forcing musicians to pay out-of-pocket for necessary expenses - comparison tables are located within the [appendix](#).

Base rates as outlined in the Best Pay Practices table assert that musicians' work must be compensated, but they must be responsive to inflationary pressures, relative cost of living where the artist and presenter reside, and the total budget for the opportunity. There are circumstances where these rates may not apply, such as where musicians can demand higher fees, or if there is a set rate offered to everyone. We offer these rates as a potential starting point to begin conversations and discussions.

These pay considerations ensure a simpler, clearer arrangement, leading to a more fruitful experience for all involved. And once a framework is created for one engagement, it can be replicated going forward.

Fair Pay Arrangements

- If possible, musicians should receive a deposit of no less than 30% upon contract signing, to cover upfront costs (including travel, accommodation)

Recommended Minimum Hourly Rate Card

Minimum Hourly Base Rate, per Musician	\$125
Experience	Emerging (N/A)
	Experienced (+10%)
	Professional (+25%)
Consideration	Increased Pay Rate
Band leader or soloist	Base Pay +25%
Special occasion or large capacity venue	Base Pay +100%
Wedding reception	Base Pay +200%
Outdoor event	Base Pay +100%
Overtime	Base Pay +100%, calculated in 15-minute increments
After midnight	Base Pay +50%

- The remaining balance should be paid as soon as possible after the performance or engagement. This should include their fee and any additional expenses (An expenses rate card is provided on [Page 19](#))
- For audience performances, **pay offered must cover the time required to facilitate that performance - including set-up, travel and transport, rehearsal, soundcheck, take-down and returning home**
On average, for a performance in front of an audience - such as a community fair, or nonprofit event - a fee representative of 6-8 hours, depending on travel time, should guide negotiations

- The [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) is a useful tool to determine a suitable amount and can be compared with the aforementioned rate card
- This can provide varied approaches to standardized pay scales within your organization for performing musicians - such as the Youth on Record utilizes for their event, which includes payment for set-up, soundcheck and performance

Considerations for Pay Rate

Many factors shape the value of a musician's time or the circumstances under which they perform. The following list is not exhaustive, but it illustrates many of the variables which may increase (or, in a few cases, decrease) the compensation a performer might receive.

- Musician characteristics
 - Skill, experience, and/or seniority
 - Leader or solo musician vs. ensemble
- Type of performance or venue
 - Concert vs. casual
 - Opening act vs. headliner
- Region (urban vs. rural)
- Venue seating capacity
- Single performance vs. ongoing engagement
- Weekday vs. weekend
- Indoor vs. outdoor
- Special occasions
 - Holiday or high demand date of event (such as Christmas or New Year's Eve)
 - Weddings
 - Funerals or last Reveille
- Additional expenses
 - Rehearsal fees
 - Travel mileage
 - Late performance (after midnight)
 - Specific requests (such as dress code, song requests, etc.)
 - Sound check
 - Lighting and sound equipment
 - Overtime
 - Cartage/porterage

CASE STUDY

CACHE (Central Arkansas Create Hub And Exchange) - Artist Fair Pay Policy

CACHE works with creatives, organizations, and communities to empower a more inclusive and equitable Northwest Arkansas. Their projects unfold across 3 mutually reinforcing phases: Research + Empower + Create. In their Courtyard Sessions program, CACHE presents a free, outdoors concert series for new bands in Northwest Arkansas.

The Courtyard Sessions feature a relaxed, outdoor environment with a diverse mix of programming from DJs, to soul, funk, and LatinX musicians. In 2022, 9 acts with a total of 14 performers participated. **Support for artists included a minimum performance fee of \$1000; career consultation; event insurance; and performance venue rentals free of charge.**

CACHE also operated as a **professional development liaison** between host organizations and partners, building continuing opportunities for their artists to perform in cities across the United States - St. Louis, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Los Angeles, and New York.

CASE STUDY

Music Export Memphis Guaranteed Pay Scheme

In 2021, [Music Export Memphis \(MEM\)](#) launched an annual compensation study to better understand pay rates in the city's live music ecosystem and more effectively advocate on behalf of musicians. After finding that the average pay per gig (\$125) had not changed in more than 30 years, **MEM instituted its own minimum rate of pay (\$250)**. In 2022, MEM began building partnerships with organizations in the city who would also adopt this minimum; in January of 2023, the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) committed at its annual State of Downtown event to paying \$250 minimum per musician for all of its bookings. The DMC regularly activates streets and green spaces with live music annually, so the boost for musicians is significant.

By setting a minimum rate of \$250 per musician, MEM effectively doubled the market's current average pay. In addition to the immediate financial benefit for artists booked by the Downtown Memphis Commission, MEM also initiated collaborations between neighborhood development groups interested in making similar commitments to cultural workers. Their work demonstrates that **shifting the market a little at a time is a viable, practical way to facilitate necessary system-wide change.**

Skill and Experience

“[W]hen we got flooded after Katrina, with people who weren't from there, who hadn't put in the 10,000 hours, [venues] were willing to pay [them] considerably less than the masters of the craft. As a result, the masters lost all their jobs, and the inexperienced people... took over the scene.”

- Working musician, *Turn Up the Mic*

Like the story above, many working musicians expressed frustration that their skill levels were not compensated fairly, and they were often priced out of the market. None of the sources we studied offered additional pay for years of experience within the music industry,

as seen in the [appendix](#). We offer suggestions for musicians to implement increases in pay commensurate with their skills while recognizing that higher rates may not be reasonably competitive within particular regional markets.

Typically, musicians work for years in the industry playing for pay. We define the different stages as follows:

- Emerging - Up to 3 years
- Experienced - 3-8 years
- Professional - 8+ years

Ensemble Configuration

Many resources we studied included higher rates for musicians performing solo, or for musicians within an ensemble acting as a leader or contractor. Whippoorwill Arts, in their Music aLIVE! program, offers an additional \$50 in administrative fees to band leaders, reflecting similar rates as other sources, which ranged from an additional 12% to 27% (see [Tables 1.2](#) and [2.2](#)).

Venue and Show Characteristics

Type of Performance or Venue

A variety of factors should be considered when establishing rates for different kinds of venues. Some sources suggest the casual or formal nature of a venue should lead to lower pay, with estimates of somewhere between 7% and 27% lower for performances in clubs, bars, or dance establishments than for “stage” performances. Casual venues often lack the site amenities or contractual features typically offered by formal venues while incurring the same or equivalent expenses for musicians. As such, we do not recommend decreasing the pay rate for casual venues, as this requires musicians to cover more costs out-of-pocket. Instead, we recommend increasing minimum pay rates for performances in which venues tend to earn more revenue, such as weekends, urban venues, or large seating capacity events.

Outdoor Venues

Musicians should expect to be compensated appropriately for outdoor performances. Venues and performance spaces should ensure that weather changes have limited capability to disrupt performances, and musicians should be assured in their contracts that they will receive pay if a show is canceled due to inclement weather. Sources indicate musicians can expect to charge twice as much for outdoor performances (see [Table 3.2](#)).

Suggested contract language from [Music Professionals of Manitoba](#) includes: “In the event musicians are asked to perform outdoors, adequate protection from the elements must be provided. Musicians shall not be required to perform on wet surfaces or when lightning is occurring or is forecasted. Musicians shall be

paid the full contracted fee for the engagement in the event that rain or inclement weather results in the cancellation of a performance, whether musicians perform or not.”

Special Events

Musicians can expect to charge a premium for special events such as weddings, funerals, holidays (such as Christmas or New Year’s Eve), and others that require more tailored or specific styles of performance. (See [Table 3.1](#)) Contracts for such occasions should reflect the immense preparation and expectation associated with performing at community rituals and gatherings.

Special occasions can cost an average of twice the normal rate, with wedding receptions commanding as much as **five times** the baseline. However, negotiation is recommended in these circumstances, as the nature of the occasion may or may not mean additional expenses or burdens on musicians beyond a typical performance.

Specific Types of Venues or Performances

Median pay recommendations were averaged from data collected from San Francisco to Nashville to Atlanta to London; across bookstore performances, school shows, nursing homes, farmers’ markets, and more. Limited evidence is available to compare rates across venues. The [pay scale and rate card](#) provide an **overview of sample rates and best practices** that explore specificity in venue or performance type, outlining a range of opportunities available to musicians and a spectrum of pay to consider for each. Most data supports paying similar rates to the minimum hourly base rate we propose across a variety of locations and show types.

CASE STUDY

Bohemian Foundation Music Events

The Bohemian Foundation, based in Fort Collins, Colorado, is a private family foundation that believes live music is a tool to animate public life, foster strong community relationships, strengthen local economies, and promote cultural diversity. Their Music Event Fund provides grants of up to \$2500 to nonprofit organizations presenting live music to strengthen communities. Grant funds can **only be used for local artists fees** and production costs. They cannot be used for national touring acts with no local members.

As such, the Music Event Fund partners with local community organizations to create performance opportunities for local musicians with **guaranteed fair pay**. This funding also ensures production staff are paid fairly and events feature **high quality sound**. The Bohemian Foundation also prioritizes equity and inclusion, engaging organizations serving **broad, diverse communities, especially youth**.

Reflections on Pay Scale Recommendations

Whippoorwill Arts faced several challenges in researching, then making these recommendations. First, we hesitate to broadly impose a set amount that asserts any musician is worth a specific, set amount of money for a given stretch of time - the **'Considerations for Pay Rate'** section makes pay recommendations based on nuanced, individual context., what the performance is, what the performance is for, and who the audience is. Unions tend to offer standard rates for hired musicians, but union power varies by locality, and most working musicians are not unionized. These variables can shape pay considerations in a variety of ways.

Second, ethical pay should align with the local cost of living and account for the cost of doing business. The latter is examined in 'Recommendation 3' of this report. Third, these recommendations seek to remedy pay disparities along gender, race, and skill level, and this report expands on diversity and inclusion considerations for hired musicians in the 'Professional Protections' section.

Our outline is far from exhaustive, but we hope it spurs organizations to employ more musicians to perform more music, with innovative, equitable models for how to do so.

Recommendation 3: Ensure artist expenses are factored in compensation

In the current music marketplace, standard practice does not account for musicians' performance-related expenses. While costs incurred are occasionally discussed during compensation negotiations, more often than not, artists assume expenses that would be considered reimbursable costs in other fields.

We recommend every compensation negotiation with presenters take musicians' expenses into account so pay is aligned with living wages and includes food, lodging, and insurance in every contract. To that end, we recommend fees either adjust or allocate budgets based, in part, on reimbursements for costs that musicians incur related to performances.

Estimated costs should be stated, and agreed on prior to the performance. Receipts may be required on submission, as detailed below. There are two ways to cover expenses - per diems (a daily sum, usually given in cash on arrival, on signature of a receipt), or expenses reimbursed (minus the deposit) at the point of invoicing, after receipts are received.

- Travel (travel tickets, fuel, contribution to maintenance of vehicle, car hire)
- Meals (food and drink, inclusive of dietary requirements stated in advance)
- Porterage or cartage costs (for percussion, backline, etc.) should be included, if required (for example to ship equipment to a site for a specific performance)¹
- Payment for time spent rehearsing²
- Load-in and removal of equipment

Adopting this approach will improve expectations and professionalism in arrangements between musicians and presenters. A musician should be secure in the understanding that organizations hiring them will maintain capacity to issue and execute contracts, account for ticket sales and expenses, and reconcile financials related to their employment.

- All musicians, for all performances and engagements - for audiences or for a specific purpose (such as teaching or other forms of capacity building) must be provided with a contract, detailing the work required, dates and call times in addition to timeframes for payment and instructions for invoicing when hired
- Draft contracts should be issued on confirmation of the engagement, and require a signed copy to be returned from the musician or their representative

1 Atlanta Federation of Musicians lists [cartage scales](#) for load-in/load-out, but the list is limited to orchestral equipment, and does not include the most common equipment used by most bands, such as electric guitars, drum kits, or sound systems/monitors/speakers. Rates vary from \$18-75 depending on the size and weight of the equipment. The [U.K. Musician's Union cartage scales](#) advise rates ranging from \$30-45 in USD.

2 In 2012, ¼ of musicians in the [Independent Society of Musicians](#) received rehearsal fees, averaging £70 (\$133.85 in today's USD).

We acknowledge that while some musicians prefer payment without the hassle of the issuing of a 1099 or other kinds of formal paperwork, such documents are vital for musicians seeking to collect social services, such as unemployment, disability & health insurance, retirement, worker's compensation, etc.

Sample Expenses Rate Card

Expenses	Average Rate
Mileage	\$0.65 per mile traveled (to and from)*
Food and Drink	\$50 per diem per band member
Accommodation (if required)	\$160 per room required
Porterage or Cartage	On request
Waiting Time Not Covered By Fee	\$55 per hour, per member

* Based on current IRS standard mileage rate; subject to change

Additional Expenses

Additional expenses may occur depending upon the performance, and may or may not be planned in advance, due to the nature of performing live. Venues and musicians should ensure that musicians are paid in the event of:

- Overtime (typically at a rate of 100% above the agreed base)
- Performances ending after midnight
- Performances requiring overnight stays
- Performances requiring additional sound or lighting equipment, including the time and resources to verify functionality

CASE STUDY

Independent Musicians Alliance & Jazz in the Neighborhood

The [Independent Musicians Alliance](#) (IMA) is a solidarity organization created to promote the free interchange of ideas and information among the professional jazz musicians of the Bay Area. It aids in their ability to collectively advocate for new standards of compensation, benefits, and working conditions in regional settings including clubs, concert halls, hotels, school rooms, weddings, conferences, bars, and virtually.

Through a musician-focused survey and in collaboration with [Jazz in the Neighborhood](#), the IMA gathered information about pay and working conditions from around the region. Survey results informed programming to educate musicians and audiences about current conditions, as well as to formulate strategies to change existing practices for the better.

Dues for member musicians are \$5 or \$10 a month. The IMA's Musicians' Assistance Fund provides **reimbursement for both expenses and professional development costs**. The fund is divided into two categories: 'Gig assistance' and 'specific assistance'. Gig assistance covers the following: **Cartage**: i.e. \$50 for electric organ, electric keyboard and amp, harp, marimba, large xylophone, vibes; \$30 for a drum set, \$20 for acoustic bass with or without amp, bass guitar and guitar with amp, bass saxophone; **Parking**: i.e. on all engagements where free parking is not provided or readily available, up to a maximum of \$30. **Travel** (mileage) allowance: in accordance with the IRS standard rate (62.5 cents per mile), available starting at a minimum of \$30. Specific assistance pays for the following: **space rental, instrument insurance, instrument repairs, cancellation fees, application fees for grants, educational classes**, etc.

The IMA also provides an active forum for members to share information on pay per gig, working conditions, and is developing minimum pay scales for performance.

In addition, musicians should expect to be compensated for time spent waiting or not performing, and to be provided break time commensurate with performance time. [Music Professionals of Manitoba](#) suggests five minutes of break time for each hour worked up to two hours, with that number rising to 15 minutes of break time for performances longer than two hours, and a minimum of two admissions for performances of three hours or more. The [U.K. Musicians Union](#) suggests 15 minutes of break time per two hours playing.

Expenses: Best Practices

- Ensure all contracts include a dedicated ‘expenses’ section detailing each arrangement
- Ensure where, when, and how per diems are offered, and that they support the purchase of high quality, nutritious food - including at least one hot meal - at local restaurant rates (\$15-25 per main course, on average)
- Provide clear guidance on how to submit expenses (for example, a form to complete; advice on keeping receipts and the need to invoice. Google forms are often best deployed here). This saves both time and money
- Pay expenses promptly to ensure the musician is out of pocket for as little time as possible - ideally within 7 days minus any deposit paid
- Guarantee and provide best practices, such as the provision of signed receipts for per diems, and that these are issued to artists upon arrival
- Use of a musician’s own vehicle should be covered at a minimum of the [current IRS standard mileage rate \(\\$0.65/mile as of December 2022\)](#)
- Ensure each musician is provided with a [1099 form](#) upon completing their performance so they are able to register the income formally and declare related business expenses. This type of documentation facilitates musicians’ access to social safety net services, such as unemployment benefits. We recommend this as a standard practice with considerations for musicians’ documentation status.

Supporting reimbursement for performance-related costs incurred is a simple and effective evolution toward improved professionalization that supports musicians by providing a financial safety net.

Recommendation 4: Expand the field to create more performance opportunities

To truly honor the economic, physical and mental

health, wellness, and community benefits of live music, we hope to expand common definitions of what constitutes the “music sector”. The music marketplace extends far beyond the commercial music industry and live performance for ticket-buying audiences. Our recommendations include expanding the field and recognizing that working musicians operate and labor across markets that extend beyond those environments.

Whippoorwill Arts’ 2021 national survey, [“Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future”](#), found that musicians are seeking stable and meaningful work, while communities benefit physically, socially, and emotionally from access to high quality music in small, intimate settings. The findings suggest civic leaders and philanthropists focused on supporting community well-being should encourage the expansion into new markets and collaborations for music in non-traditional venues. For instance, bring quality live music to people living in elder care, those who use disability services, unhoused programs, underserved schools, prisons, etc. Many folks receiving these services deeply want and benefit from live music but cannot easily access or afford it.

Example Opportunities and Pay Models

In the table below, we provide examples of performances that are often offered to musicians within this third sector. These include community festivals, public sector events, farmer’s markets/shopping malls, elder care facilities/nursing homes, unhoused communities, prisons, rehabilitation centers, public/private schools, house concerts, weddings, and live streaming.

A brief description of standard practices for these events is included, alongside best practices for musician compensation and information on how the events and venues raised funds to provide musicians’ pay.

Table 1. Types of Opportunities & Pay Models

Opportunity Type & Details	Examples of Current Pay Models	How were funds raised for the music budget?
Community Festival		
<p>Performance Details: 30-90 minute performance on average, plus set-up, soundcheck, load in & load out</p> <p>Other Considerations: Public liability insurance may be required</p>	<p>In Memphis, all downtown performances <u>offer \$250 per musician per performance</u>, inclusive of soundcheck and rehearsal</p> <p>At Northwest FolkLife, \$2000 per ensemble was provided for the 2022 Superfolk Festival for two performances; out of state musicians received lodging and airfare from partner Whippoorwill Arts; all acts received the same payment contract</p> <p>When it began in 2001, Denver’s Underground Music Showcase <u>offered a minimum of \$250</u> per musician or group. That rate is <u>now between \$200-400</u></p> <p>Music aLIVE! offers \$650/trio for one hour concerts within driving distance to concert, no sound equipment needed</p>	<p>Funds were raised through philanthropy, community fundraising or grants</p>
Public Sector Event		
<p>Performance Details: A performance that is funded in full or in part by the taxpayer, be it in a public or private setting</p> <p>This includes free public festivals, events, community celebrations, receptions, and launches.</p>	<p>\$250 to \$400 per member is the average rate for such performances</p> <p>\$500- \$1500 per group (no matter the amount of members) for private receptions (such as for political candidates, launches or openings of facilities)</p>	<p>Each performance is different, but this is often funded through public funding</p>

Opportunity Type & Details	Examples of Current Pay Models	How were funds raised for the music budget?
Farmers Markets/Shopping Malls		
<p>Performance Details: On average 30-45 minutes</p> <p>3-4 musicians and groups are programmed per event</p> <p>Other Considerations: Traders pay to have booths at events, on average \$25 to \$250, depending on the location</p> <p>Acoustic artists are preferred, as all PA and sound equipment must be brought in</p> <p>Farmers Markets may require a waiver to be signed, which removes their requirement to pay licensing fees</p>	<p>\$100-200 per musician or group, per 30-45 minute performance</p> <p>Seattle’s Shop to the Beat matches artists with retail partners, but payment is at the discretion of the buyer</p>	<p>Often funded through stall fees, business improvement districts or community development organizations, or through a direct grant or allocation from the municipality, region or county</p> <p>Performances in private facilities (shopping malls) are at the discretion of the owner/operator of the premises</p>
Elder Care Facilities/Nursing Homes		
<p>Performance Details: Typically 60-90 minutes in the early afternoon</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted Living Residences • Nursing Homes • Retirement Communities • Long-term Care Facilities <p>Other Considerations: There are different scales for public and private care facilities</p> <p>Musicians will require liability insurance to qualify to perform</p> <p>Most suitable for acoustic performances, due to lack of equipment in the facilities</p>	<p>\$80-150 per 45-60 minute performance, per musician</p> <p>An uplift of 10-20% is standard for weekend performances</p>	<p>This can be paid for from foundation and corporate grants and/or budgeted by the care facility. Privately owned ones may pay more than publicly funded ones</p>

Opportunity Type & Details	Examples of Current Pay Models	How were funds raised for the music budget?
Underserved Listeners		
<p>Performance Details: For those who want music but do not typically have access, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhoused people • Incarcerated people • Participants in rehabilitation programs <p>Most of the performance opportunities researched are committed to in a volunteer capacity.</p> <p>Other Considerations: Performers will require a CRB check and to have no criminal background, and this process may be costly and take months.</p> <p>Public liability insurance is required.</p>	<p>In terms of prisons and rehabilitation centers / halfway houses, guidelines are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A \$100-\$200 per hour fee per musician or a flat fee of up-to \$600 per performance for one hour, inclusive of travel to/from • The cost includes the time to enter and exit the prison, which can take several hours • Performances are often offered one-off fees, while teaching engagements are per-hour, for up to 2 or 3 hours 	<p>Paid for through fundraising from local businesses and foundations such as Whippoorwill Arts' Music aLIVE</p> <p>And in some cases by the prisons or a nonprofit that produces the programming, such as the Bard Prison Initiative (at Rikers and other prisons)</p>
Cover Bands, House Concerts, and Weddings		
<p>Performance Details: Performance is often contracted for between 2 and 4 hours, exclusive of set-up.</p> <p>House concerts are 1-to-1 negotiations, but Side Door Access is a leading musician-friendly platform.</p> <p>Other Considerations: There are a number of services that facilitate bookings, each guaranteeing a fee (upon booking) but taking a percentage (most usually 10%-20%).</p> <p>Musicians and bands will require liability insurance.</p>	<p>Minimum \$200-250 per member, exclusive of travel and meals, for a cover band performance at a local venue.</p> <p>House concerts revenue is usually split 80/20 with the host, minus the platform fee.</p> <p>Minimum \$350-500 per band member, per performance, exclusive of travel expenses and meals for weddings.</p>	<p>Wedding performance fees are dependent on the type and length of performance. Cover bands may be paid through a nightly cover at a venue. House concerts are often funded through pre-sold tickets.</p>

CASE STUDY:

Whippoorwill Arts Music aLIVE and Curated Concerts

Whippoorwill Arts developed programming in direct response to the findings of our 2021 Roots Musician Survey, “[Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future](#)”, where working musicians called for guaranteed pay, professional protections, and more opportunities to perform for small listening audiences.

The **Music aLIVE** program helps musicians get back to work post-pandemic through paid performances for small, listening audiences in non-traditional venues. The program works with historically underserved communities who often cannot access or afford traditionally ticketed venues, such as elders, disabled people, K-12 public school students, incarcerated people, unhoused people, and more.

Guidelines

- Band leaders can earn a \$50 booking fee
- Concert taken offline after 30 days to protect the value of the performance

Both programs feature primarily BIPOC and LGBTQIA artists. Music aLIVE concerts feature acoustic solos, duos, or trios to limit the equipment required to support sound. Payment for the concerts considers travel time and rising gas prices, situating all gigs within driving distance or near public transportation. Daytime concerts on weekdays are unlikely to conflict with artists’ ticketed gigs. Music aLIVE also ensures **equity booking** to showcase BIPOC, queer, and disabled musicians for these guaranteed pay performance opportunities.

“Having quality musicians to play at the shelter has elevated the morale significantly. Now our residents look forward to those nights! There is a celebratory atmosphere that is created thanks to the power of art and the willingness of the artists to perform as if they were in a “real” music venue. Our hope was to create a sense of caring and community through food and thanks to Whippoorwill Arts, connection and joy was brought into the equation. We love to have this gift once a week!”

- Andrea Rey,
*Homeward Bound
Homeless Services*

CASE STUDY

Sound Affects

Sound Affects music programming connects professional musicians with underserved audiences living in care facilities or at home. Through live performance, one-on-one residencies, and advocacy, Sound Affects meets the needs of those prone to isolation who cannot access public music in preferred ways. Specifically, Sound Affects works to remove **significant barriers that older adults living in underserved care communities, facilities, and nursing homes experience in accessing quality music**. Simultaneously, many musicians prefer stable, local, and meaningful work, but are often forced to travel and play music in settings that may not align with their values.

Sound Affects ensures musicians are always paid a base rate that compares with their other work. Musicians are never asked to volunteer their time. Facility sites contract with Sound Affects on a sliding scale and grant funds are used to supplement the cost of supporting Sound Affects' musicians. Currently, Sound Affects acts are **paid \$125 per hour per musician**.

Sound Affects' model provides musicians with **daytime work and regular hiring** (monthly and weekly). This gives musicians **local stability** that aligns well with and takes into account nighttime/weekend/touring schedules. When artists are supported by stable pay in service agencies, it allows them to devote their time and craft into these spaces fully, knowing they can reasonably prioritize meaningful work. Sound Affects also employs equity booking to support working musicians financially undervalued in their communities.

CASE STUDY

Springboard for the Arts UBI Scheme

Springboard for the Arts is a regional nonprofit arts organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

In alignment with a city-wide pay equity initiative, the organization launched a pilot program providing **unrestricted monthly support** to 25 artists in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods for 18 months, beginning in April 2021. The program has been extended into a Phase 2 - the inaugural 25 artists continue to receive support, and an additional 25 artists have been welcomed into the program. The pilot proved **artists can generate more creative work with a reasonable financial safety net in place**.

Pay Guidelines

- \$500 per calendar month offered to 25 artists for 18 months
- An additional 50 artists joined the initial cohort in 2023
- The second phase is split between urban and rural artists - a first for a UBI scheme

According to the social impact report, the guaranteed income's impact included:

- **Financial Stability**; including helping with basic needs, especially as pandemic-related aid runs out
- Long-term planning for social services, including **healthcare, savings, homeownership**
- Shifting exclusionary practices in the art world to empower diverse artists
- Build a safety net for artists to **generate creative work for their community and stay in their neighborhood**
- Funding for artists' business expenses, such as equipment for art practice

Professional Protections

Pay is an important consideration to ensure all communities, nonprofit and third-sector programmers establish healthy, lucrative and mutually supportive relationships with local musicians. But there are other personal protections and non-monetary considerations this section explores to establish the most equitable working conditions for all.

Musicians generally operate in the gig economy - a labor market that relies on temporary, short-term commitments - where artists often cannot access benefits that would protect their health or provide a financial safety net. Increasingly, organizations operating in the gig economy, along with the local, state and national governments overseeing them, are starting to recognize:

- Workers have the right to be paid the national minimum wage
- Workers have the right to claim sick leave, parental leave, severance pay, and rest breaks at work
- Workers have the right to compensation for occupational accidents and illnesses
- Workers are entitled to protection from discrimination in the workplace

The [appendix](#) offers two case studies that witness paradigm shifts within gig economies. The [United Kingdom Fair Pay Scheme](#) overviews the United Kingdom's Supreme Court ruling that defined the above rights for Uber drivers in February 2021. [Case Study 16](#) explores

In January 2020, the [South African Department of Labor issued a notice](#) extending professional protections to workers in the film and television industry. This offered sick leave, parental leave, severance pay, proof of incapacity, and compensation claims for occupational accidents

and illnesses to workers previously considered to be self-employed or independent contractors and consequently uncovered ([Case Study 16](#)).

Musician's Charter of Protections

These professional protections and strategies can be extrapolated to a musician charter of protections across the nonprofit and third-sector. The following outlines recommended practices for community leaders and organizations to consider adopting with respect to:

- Healthcare [Case Study: Artists at Work](#)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing [Case Study: Youth on Record](#)
- Financial Security [Case Studies: Local 1000](#) and [France Intermittence DU Spectacle](#)
- Accessibility [Case Study: RAMPD](#)
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, and Protection from Discrimination & Harassment [Case Study: BAAITS](#)

We make the following recommendations for community leaders and organizations to consider adopting to improve : Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Unemployment, Disability Culture and Accessibility, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and other facets.

Healthcare

Independent musicians in the United States operate similar to other self-employed laborers. Most access health insurance through individual, paid plans if they are ineligible to obtain it through employers, their parents, partners or spouse. The ways artists secure insurance differs, and many rely on music community organizations for references and sometimes, actual policies, when available.

Funders, unions, cooperatives, performing rights, and arts service organizations sometimes supplement healthcare options for artists by providing plans artists could not otherwise access, including grants that subsidize co-pays. Some provide additional benefits not included on standard insurance plans, such as mental health care, emergency care, dental, or disability.

A growing number of national organizations focus on musicians' health and well being. For example:

- [MusiCares](#) is a music industry resource for the community and members of the Recording Academy. One does not need to be a voting member to receive benefits. In addition to providing advice, the organization has a fund to cover emergency or unexpected health care costs
- [The Phoenix](#) sobriety programs could be replicated community-wide across aligned nonprofits and third-sector organizations that program and engage with artists

Some US cities have further expanded offerings. For example:

- In Austin, [HAAM](#) provides healthcare plans and insurance to low income working musicians. In 2022, HAAM saved musicians \$7,711 on average - a substantial, deeply transformative amount for most working musicians
- Seattle's [SMASH](#) offers a healthcare plan for its working, domiciled musicians that can include dental and eye care, emergency care or mental health
- In Nashville, [Music Health Alliance](#) provides transparent healthcare advocacy services to connect the music community to the most appropriate and affordable healthcare and health insurance solutions

Organizations that wish to support musicians' health and well-being can take specific steps to be more artist friendly. Here are a few top level recommendations:

- Providing access to group specialized insurance options for the physical tools most musicians rely on to perform their jobs, such as their hands, feet or their voice
- Offer substance-related precautions for musicians. Alcohol is never an acceptable substitute for monetary payment. Provide access to Narcan and drug testing kits for performers and audiences
- Ensure cleanliness, physical safety, privacy, and quiet in accommodations offered to musicians

Alcohol is never an acceptable substitute for monetary payment.

Artists at Work

Artists at Work (AAW) is a workforce resilience program in the spirit of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), designed to support rebuilding healthy communities through artistic civic engagement. AAW was launched in 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic, which laid bare existing problems in the artist economy. AAW wanted to get money into the hands of all kinds of artists who no longer had an ability to make a living. They asked themselves, “Can we build something equitable now that all the walls have been broken down?”, and also wanted to acknowledge that **artists are workers and are as crucial to communities as any other “worker.”**

AAW launched a pilot program in Western Massachusetts with seed funding from the Freshgrass Foundation. In partnership with local community organizations, AAW chose artists from a wide variety of genres and backgrounds, prioritizing artists without full-time jobs. Chosen artists were put on AAW payroll for one year with a **salaried position and full health benefits** (which also allows them to be eligible for safety net benefits such as unemployment and COBRA at the end of the year). They were paid to continue their art practice and embed with a local social service agency for an artist - and community-driven project. For example, singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Naia Kete embedded with The Alianza Project, a youth-led nonprofit organization that supports communities in healing themselves from the effects of trauma through therapeutic, artistic, spiritual, and pro-social experiences. Every month during the pilot program, Naia interviewed a different youth educator from The Alianza Project in the process of their own healing and wrote a song inspired by their personal stories. The tangible outputs were a 6-song EP, a series of mini-documentaries to share the process of research, interviews, writing, and recording the songs each month, as well as a digital songbook filled with lyrics, images, and quotes from the youth to accompany the project.

Since the program’s inception, AAW has put **60 artists on payroll across 10 states** and hopes to expand to every state through public-private partnerships.

Pay Guideline:

- AAW used the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) to help determine salaries in each location of the project. Salaries considered the value of the work and UBI (Universal Basic Income)
- AAW determined a median salary of \$32,500 with the understanding that the position was not a full-time endeavor, and that artists typically had other sources of income. Determining salary levels raised complicated questions – are the artists exempt or non-exempt? Do they need to “clock hours”? For musicians on Medicaid, increased income risked making them ineligible for the benefit and could have forced a disruption in medical care. Other artists wanted to keep their existing health insurance and requested that the position’s healthcare funds be used to increase the base salary instead
- AAW gave \$10k to the social service agency each artist was embedded with to ensure this program would not become a financial burden on the organization

In addition to creating space for artists to experiment, learn, and generate new income, AAW’s strategy offered **consistent financial support** and safety net resources to artists for a full year. They offered **full healthcare benefits, and artists were eligible for unemployment and COBRA benefits** at the residency’s conclusion.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Generally speaking, while a lot of best practices are intended to document mental health and wellbeing, the demands placed on musicians, industry norms, and the way live events are conducted are not always conducive to musicians achieving these common goals. Offering musicians safe and clean environments to work in, access to healthy food, places to rest, and resources for substance abuse, and ethical pay are the most effective ways to instill and protect musicians' wellbeing. Artists' riders also contain vital information on how to support wellbeing during a performance.

Organizations can also take the following steps to improve musicians' mental health and well being:

- Adopt a mental health system, similar to the [Mental Health in Brass Bands charter](#), that recognizes the need to invest in mental health programs and policies. This could be augmented with online workshops with mental health professionals, offered to grantees or musicians hired for specific or recurring performances
- Compile research and data related to musicians hired across performance opportunities. Such audits can better centralize and target resources accordingly
- Include local emergency helplines, resources and organizations for musicians in contracts and deal memos
- Provide musicians with per diem or other ways (for instance, a buyout) to cover the cost of meals, and pay for or reimburse musicians for event-related expenses such as travel and accommodations
- Provide a separate, private space (green room) for musician(s) to prepare for performances
- Provide a secure location for musicians to park if they are traveling in a vehicle, and a safe pathway from their vehicle to the venue. Note: avoid making assumptions about what is safe based on staff familiarity with your venue's neighborhood, or inherent privilege they might hold personally. Instead, stay up to-date on reported crime rates and activity in your area
- Provide ramps, lifts, and accessibility accommodations needed for artists with disabilities. (Asking artists their needs in advance telegraphs a presenter's proactive attentiveness and willingness to provide necessary accommodations on this front)
- Allow and plan for reasonable time for musicians to prepare for performances, or to complete administrative work (such as providing publicity materials for marketing)
- Provide one named point of contact and a reasonable response time that musicians can approach with any questions or specific needs related to performance opportunities or questions
- Ensure all employees and third-party suppliers have received [Mental Health First Aid](#) training and have required liability insurances
- Ensure accommodations provided to musicians are clean, free of pests, safe, reasonably private, and secure
- Purchase and make available reading materials promoting mental health and wellbeing - for example the recently published '[Touring and Mental Health Manual for Musicians](#)' (Omnibus Press, 2022)

We recommend that presenters, presenting partners, funders, and host organizations all take a look at Emily Johnson's [Decolonization Rider](#) and Unlimited's resource for [Creating Your Own Access Rider](#). These documents respectively outline how contractors can comply with Indigenous Protocol and Acknowledgment and how they can support individuals' access requirements.

CASE STUDY

Youth on Record

Youth on Record, a nonprofit based in Denver, empowers Colorado's underserved youth to thrive academically, artistically, and personally by employing local, professional artists as educators. They aim to advance academic success, increase economic opportunities, build career skills, and strengthen community connections and networks.

Their [Underground Music Showcase](#) delivered skill-sharing, networking, professional development, and mentoring to each participating musician, alongside their booked and paid performances. Their 2022 event served over 70 local artists in the following ways:

- Professional development training for 75 artists
- **3 free therapy sessions** to all fest goers, in partnership with WellPower
- **Sober, safe space** for all artists and their teams
- Access to online workshops for 600 artists
- Mental wellness impact headlining concert
- 20+ community partnerships established
- 6 Underground community parties, all paying artists

Each artist was **guaranteed pay for performing** at \$200 per solo artist or \$400 per band. Across the festival, Youth on Record paid \$100,000 to artists.

Financial Security

Musicians primarily operate within the gig economy, where it is increasingly difficult to secure a financial safety net. The precarity of musicians' economic position became clear during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. While some musicians are incorporated, others operate as sole proprietors - status which greatly influenced the level of support they received during the pandemic.

19% of musicians had no health insurance, 66% did not have retirement funds, 85% did not have unemployment insurance, 86% did not have any sort of paid leave, 85% did not have disability insurance, and 85% did not have mental health coverage.

- Whippoorwill Arts and Slover-Linett,
Turn Up the Mic

As outlined in the Pay Guidelines section, we recommend that all payments organizations make for performance align with, or exceed, living wage calculations. We advise both musicians and presenters to ensure that all agreements are provided in writing in the form of a signed contract. All venues should request a W-9 from musicians, with the presenter's information filled out in advance. Once performances are complete, venues should ensure that each musician is provided with an IRS 1099 form in order to claim their income.

When possible, organizations should offer tips and guidelines for musicians on how to properly track and document gig employment, including information on eligibility

and application requirements for unemployment benefits, so musicians can prepare appropriate documentation to receive social services as a gig worker.

Further, it is important to understand and respect the ways in which music support and service organizations had to mobilize to close a social safety net gap for music workers during the pandemic. Organizations that have musician members increased grants and programs for musicians struggling with health and access to healthcare. The pandemic exacerbated many underlying, systemic issues within the music ecosystem. Musicians continue to bear great risk traveling and working in varying settings, to maintain health and wellness.

In addition, the pandemic gave rise to new insurance costs being levied in the direction of musicians - costs that were previously absorbed by presenters and service organizations. For example, since experiencing rounds of cancellations, reduced coverage and rising prices of insurance, some presenters are requiring musicians to pay additional fees to buy into their event liability insurance policies, or carry their own, instead of providing that coverage. While that was a periodic occurrence for individual musicians before the pandemic, it has dramatically increased in practice since the pandemic. With no apparent impact on pay rate to adjust for that increased overhead, musicians absorb additional costs by default.

CASE STUDY

Local 1000 Touring Musicians Fair Pay Rates

The **American Federation of Musicians (AFM) Local 1000**, is the Traveling Musicians Union, chartered to represent acoustic musicians who perform most of their gigs away from the AFM jurisdiction where they live.

While touring musicians hold a calling, they face isolated and risky lifestyles - **risk of illness, instrument theft, of employers backing out on contracts, and especially risk of poverty, if age or disability stopped them from working.**

Local 1000 works together to improve conditions for all traveling folk, bluegrass, blues and acoustic musicians. **Its members perform under union contracts, with union power to back them up. Instruments, computers and equipment are insured for replacement value, at affordable rates.**

'**Fair Trade Music**' is a far-reaching organizing campaign, ensuring that musicians, as cultural workers, have the right to a fair, equitable living wage and safe working conditions, free from harassment and discrimination. Local 1000 asks venues to commit to paying union scale and providing a safe, dignified working environment for every performer they hire. Fair Trade Music actively works towards a cultural community where venues guarantee fair wages and safe working conditions for every musician they hire, union member or not.

They request music venues to make a public commitment to fair pay, at least \$200 per musician for small venues and \$300 per musician for larger venues. Their work ensures fair **pay in equal shares for all artists**, furthering the safety net through contract and instrument insurance.

Pay Guideline

- A public commitment to fair pay for artists by music venues, led by Local 1000
- \$200 per musician for small venues (~under 150) - equal share, all paid same
- \$300 per musician for larger venues (~over 150) - equal share

CASE STUDY

France's Intermittence DU Spectacle

France employs a national unemployment compensation system for performing artists and technicians in the performing arts sector - inclusive of nonprofit and third sector, administered by the French Government agency dedicated to work and unemployment allowance.

Intermittence du Spectacle is a system of compensation designed for people working in the performing arts and entertainment industries, who alternate between periods of employment and unemployment. This status provides a compensation, or allowance, to those who work a minimum number of hours, or engagements, per year. The system was first created in 1936 for the film industry, as a **form of compensation for workers who did not qualify for annual or permanent contracts with their employers because of the short-term nature of their work.** In 2020, there were 242,000 'intermittents du spectacle' documented. Employers of intermittents are required to pay into the system. To be eligible under the scheme, 507 working hours as a performing artist or technician must be achieved in the span of 12 months. Activities other than rehearsals or performances can be taken into consideration under certain conditions, including training and career development, teaching, **periods of illness, work accidents, and pregnancy.**

Intermittence du Spectacle provides greater protections for workers in the gig economy by subsidizing industries that typically operate on temporary labor.

Accessibility

Uplifting Disability Culture

Organizations in the music industry should set accessibility and inclusion standards beyond compliance with applicable laws. Artists with disabilities **“generate art, music, literature, and other expressions of [their] lives, [their] culture, infused from [their] experience of disability”** (Brown 1996). The arts ecosystem holds a responsibility to tend and nurture this unique community, identity, and lived experience to affirm and embrace our common humanity.

As located in the Music Industry Primer, almost **70% of musicians with disabilities reported experiencing discrimination or harassment.** Moreover, according to RAMPD, two thirds of musicians with disabilities do not disclose due to this stigma and often perform in conditions that risk their health.

“With my disability, I couldn't get unemployment in the arts community and people giving out money were not considering disabled musicians. There literally was nothing there.”

- Working musician, Turn Up the Mic

It is imperative for the music industry to shift, improve and expand accessibility practices. We recommend that organizations hiring musicians:

- Provide the same level of considerations and accessibility options to artists they hire as they do to audience members and/or patrons
- Hire or **designate an access coordinator** virtually and on site. This person would be responsible for meeting requests and access requirements disclosed in the artist's rider or inform the artist ahead of time if they cannot

- Ensure all spaces used or otherwise endorsed by funders and organizations have backstage, rehearsal, and front of house spaces which, at a minimum, **meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements**, including load in facilities. Where spaces are not accessible, funders and organizations raise this directly with the space, on behalf of artists. The [National Independent Venue Foundation \(NIVF\)](#) offers substantive best practices in the United States working to make venues safer and more accessible, across all disabilities and access challenges. In the United Kingdom, further resources can be compiled from [Attitude is Everything](#)
- Ask musicians every time about access needs, whether they consider themselves disabled or not, or if they are managing a long term health condition. **Report these statistics annually** and disclose online to demonstrate a living commitment to disability culture
- Check internal project budgets to ensure there is no disparity between access to disabled artists compared with their nondisabled peers
- Continue to **invest in hybrid** (virtual/in-person) programming. Request speakers to provide brief audio descriptions. For example, my name is James, and I am a white man wearing a blue collared shirt, black glasses, and a purple hat. I am sitting in a room with beige walls and there is a plant next to me
- Provide audio descriptions when new speakers. For example, This is Susan speaking, I am a Black woman wearing a purple dress and bright red cowboy boots

Check in with artists about COVID-19 practices around masking, testing, and social distancing.

CASE STUDY

RAMPD

Founded in 2021 by artist and advocate Lachi, RAMPD counters the music industry's serious lack of visibility, access, and representation for professional disabled artists. They actively work with organizations in the music, entertainment, and event industries to improve their accessibility practices, and to connect them to a thriving, global network of artists with disabilities.

In 2022, Lachi and RAMPD guided the Grammys in amplifying disability culture and visibility. They recommended the following accessibility commitments:

- Visible RAMP to the stage (preferably built in)
- Visible ASL interpreters (in-person and virtual)
- Live Captioning
- Live Audio Description
- Self-Description
- On Screen visibility of disabled artists
- Below the line hiring of disabled staff, crew, and consultants
- Inclusion of an organization amplifying disability culture in the inclusion rider
- Publicity/Press of the accessibility efforts
- Social Media accessibility through captioning, alt text, camel case hashtags, and inclusive messaging

Lachi and RAMPD co-founder Gaelynn Lea recommend that it is imperative for large organizations and event spaces to hire a Disability Culture consultant or staff member, and underscore that disability inclusion and access work should be paid. We encourage organizations to utilize [RAMPD's membership database](#) to identify emerging musicians.

CASE STUDY

Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS)

BAAITS is a community-based volunteer organization offering culturally relevant activities for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Native Americans, their families and friends. Two-Spirit refers to the commonly shared notion among many Native American tribes that some individuals naturally possessed and manifested both a masculine and feminine spiritual qualities. American society commonly identifies Two-Spirit People as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender.

Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits comes together to socialize, share and network in an alcohol and drug-free environment. BAAITS sees itself as an organization for Two-Spirit people to explore their rich heritage in a safe environment.

Their programming includes:

- Direct-to-artist grants up to \$5000 for Two-Spirit identifying artists living in the Bay Area. Funding can be applied to support projects addressing queer Indigeneity and professional development opportunities
- Virtual events and talking circles for community health and wellness.
- Free dinners, social mixers, and drag workshops
- Free, sober powwow spaces featuring Two-Spirit performers of dance and music. Performances are also live streamed via Youtube for accessibility
- Connection to paid performance opportunities for Two-Spirit performers

BAAITS' engagement with artists nurtures queer Indigenous voices and promotes accessibility through free, live-streamed, and sober events. They foster creative community and connections, as well as host healthy, fulfilling environments for gathering and sharing. In creating paid performance and grant opportunities, BAAITS sets a precedent for the levels of investment, respect, and compensation their artists deserve.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Protection from Discrimination & Harassment

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Employing ethical pay practices and protections for musicians' financial, physical, and emotional health directly translates to a more equitable and inclusive music economy for musicians, audiences, and businesses alike.

Intentional philanthropy can be a powerful partner to organizations such as BAAITS in the movement towards a more just, respectful, and inclusive world. Many of the United States' most powerful cultural institutions remain overwhelmingly monocultural. For example, the [2020 Lee and Low diversity survey](#) found that 76% of the entire publishing industry was white. But there is a deep cultural pulse making its way into institutions, as located by the

Mellon Foundation’s [2022 Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey](#). In 2015, 82% of leadership positions in the museum industry were held by white staff members. In 2022, white staff members comprise 73% of leadership positions - an almost 10% decrease that tangibly creates opportunity for BIPOC leadership to produce culture. Nonetheless, there is still work to be done, and representation is not enough. Inclusion is an active practice of continuous becoming, and achieving these goals requires commitment and protection.

Phase 3 of our research, [Music Industry Primer](#), details the scale of identity-based discrimination that exists within the music industry. 64% of Black musicians reported facing discrimination or harassment while working, even with professional protections in place, compared to 36.4% of White musicians. The report also identified a positive correlation between experiences of discrimination and lower income status.³ In other words, musicians facing discrimination make significantly less money than peers from different backgrounds who do not face the same obstacles, resistance, or threats.

Table 2. Discrimination & Harassment by Race in the Music Industry

	Reported experiencing discrimination or harassment	Had professional protections in place to prevent discrimination	Had been discriminated against with no professional protections in place	Had been discriminated against even though protections were in place
Black	64.2%	18.2%	53.1%	11.1%
East Asian	40.9%	27.3%	22.7%	18.2%
Indigenous	51.0%	32.7%	32.7%	18.4%
Latinx or Hispanic	41.5%	15.1%	34.0%	7.5%
Middle Eastern/Arab	50.0%	27.3%	31.8%	18.2%
Hawai’ian/ Pacific Islander	58.8%	29.4%	41.2%	17.6%
South Asian	41.7%	16.7%	41.7%	0.0%
White	32.2%	20.5%	23.2%	9.1%
Other	36.4%	11.4%	29.5%	6.8%

³ According to [Music Industry Primer](#), harassment or discrimination was positively correlated with lower income; of those who reported harassment, 18.1% made less than \$10,000/year, and another 18.1% made between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Two-thirds of musicians experiencing discrimination made less than \$40,000 a year, while more than half of those who were not subjected to discrimination made more than \$40,000 annually.

Professional protections significantly reduce the frequency at which musicians experience discrimination, but they do not work well for everyone. Direct-to-artist grants offer another way to bolster protections for musicians through material empowerment. We recommend grant-making organizations take effort to fund artists from historically disenfranchised backgrounds, considering race & ethnicity, immigration status, gender & sexuality, caste, and disability.

We encourage organizations to join this shifting tide and cultivate environments that encourage participation from musicians across lines of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, class, and language. A dynamic and inclusive work environment also requires processes to protect artists and staff through instances of identity-based discrimination.

We recommend organizations:

- Employ an equity booking strategy when hiring musicians
 - Make public commitments to active diversity and inclusion work by:
 - Hire and empower a diverse team. Staff retention rates can reflect the health and safety of a work environment
 - Advocate for pay transparency between artists hired
 - Create a work culture of simultaneous compassion and accountability
 - Build institutional memory for best practices working with artists from Disabled, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ backgrounds
 - Take measures to ensure artists will be safe while arriving at the gig, performing, and leaving. For example, organizers can provide and/or pay for nearby parking to ensure artists do not have far to go, alone at night, to reach their vehicles or other methods of transportation
- Create processes for addressing instances of discrimination and harassment in your organization. Write, review and revise an annual policy affirming commitments to protecting affected individuals with specific reporting and investigative procedures. This policy should be signed by all musicians and employees as part of the contract
 - Develop and publish - and offer to all musicians as well - an easy to understand anti-discrimination policy. A policy should clearly establish that dignity and respect for all human beings is non-negotiable and demonstrate a living commitment to learning and creating a supportive and healthy place of work and performance. The policy should acknowledge that we all possess identities shaped by our relationships to race & ethnicity, religion, gender & sexuality, age, caste, disability, marital status, nation state, and military & veteran status
 - Enquire about funded performance spaces' accessibility, anti-discrimination, and harassment policies

These professional protections and strategies are proposed as guidelines that can both 'trickle down' and 'trickle up' the nonprofit and third-sector music ecosystem, to ensure the best treatment possible for musicians and all those who engage with them. We recognize that all organizations face limitations - funding, geography, reach and time - but with joint missions, strategies and frameworks, everyone will benefit by buy-in across the organization. Much like the pay guidelines in this report that hope to set actionable standards for all those engaging with musicians, these professional protection recommendations are an objective approach to adopt and employ best practices. We believe we can all improve, and when we do, we all benefit.

Summary

The key findings of this report are:

- Paying musicians for all opportunities benefits everyone **across the ecosystem**
- There are multiple opportunities for musicians to enhance and improve their communities, and for **communities to create well-paid, non-extractive jobs by employing musicians**
- Live music performance is labor and musicians should be paid, not asked to play for free or exposure. We encourage **data collection**, collaboration, and open conversation to make this industry-wise shift incrementally
- There is significant momentum and need for the music industry to make these changes
- There are pay scales that we can learn from and adopt everywhere to ensure that all artists are paid
- A commitment to access and inclusion benefits everyone – employers, artists, audiences, and business owners alike

Final Thoughts

From the scale of local community initiatives to international policy shifts, there are so many places we can learn from to build a better ecosystem for live music. Organizations are exploring paths to implementing fees and considerations recommended in our pay scales and rate cards. We hope this report supports the adoption and acceleration of this necessary, shifting tide, encouraging pilot UBI schemes and guaranteed income for live performance until these pilots become policy.

Paying musicians, in all circumstances, benefits the entire ecosystem. We do not work in vacuums! Live music is a necessary social good, and we must recognize that musicians' work is labor, and all labor necessitates fair compensation.

The recommendations and ideas here are tools Whippoorwill Arts, Center for Music Ecosystems, 4AArts and the partnering organizations and advisors who helped frame and author this document, offered in good faith, in a state of continuous becoming, constantly evolving, and in an earnest attempt to help all stakeholders grow and evolve.

To this end, Whippoorwill Arts seeks and offers to facilitate interactive workshops with engaged constituencies, beginning with arts/music funders, musician advocacy organizations, and organizations with aligned values with influence, financial

power and with programs that benefit large numbers of musicians. We aim to be methodological and thoughtful in the ways we ask entities to update their business practices. We know it is not easy - and our intention is to call all organizations "in" to work across our differences for the benefit of our communities.

Our guiding ethos aligns with many union-style principles, but sees other avenues for those who do not wish to join a union, too. We hope to demonstrate how feasible it is to introduce these values to community, business, and artistic practices at large.

In the process of drafting and revising this summary report, our Advisory Board and many collaborators have envisioned additional practical applications of these guidelines not outlined here. Future versions of this report might offer toolkits for musicians to advocate for their own rates, encourage music consumers to engage ethically with the music economy, and demonstrate how broadening benefits to musicians bolsters business ecosystems across sectors. Grant-making organizations, both private and public, might use these guidelines to encourage or necessitate recipients to meet certain standards of data collection, pay, and protection. The list goes on, and so too will our work...

Once you have reviewed this material, please provide your feedback here:

[Short Survey](#)

Acknowledgments

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Supporting Research (Phases 1-3)

PHASE 1 | Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future (October 2021)

Whippoorwill Arts in collaboration with Americana Music Association, Blues Foundation, Folk Alliance International, International Bluegrass Association and Local 1000 of American Federation of Musicians.

In early 2021, Whippoorwill Arts partnered with research powerhouse [Slover Linett on a landmark survey of roots musicians](#). The resulting three-week-long window of data collection included 1,234 working musicians, as well as four focus groups and twelve industry interviews.

The survey results reveal evidence of significant income decline due to expectations musicians face of performing for free or reduced rates; streaming; unstable compensation systems; mental and physical health crises; and discrimination across lines of age, gender, race, and disability. The report explores three kinds of change cited first-hand by musicians as necessary to create a more sustainable, equitable, and thriving music ecosystem: guaranteed pay with expenses considered, professional protections, and more opportunities to perform for small, listening audiences.

Whippoorwill Arts then identified broad action areas to inform subsequent research phases and programming to provide the change that working musicians need to survive and thrive. These include:

- Determining what constitutes adequate compensation for working musicians
- Promoting equity pay standards, in part through guaranteed minimum pay for performances
- Expanding the range of funding mechanisms that roots musicians can access

For musicians, music is not merely a career but a deep calling. The performance of music is nonetheless labor and necessitates adequate compensation. Ethical pay for musicians makes possible greater social good through the personal and collective benefits of music for communities.

For musicians,
music is not merely
a career but a deep
calling.

The table below provides a profile of the working musicians who participated in the survey. Major findings are also available in a visual story on the [Whippoorwill Arts Advocacy/Research Report](#).

General Trends	Younger musicians (18-40)	Mature musicians (41-56)	Older musicians (57+)
PART-/FULL-TIME AS A MUSICIAN	← All groups include a mix of people who make less than half their income as a musician, more than half their income as a musician, and all of their income as a musician →		
DEMOGRAPHICS	Slightly more diverse group (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability)	← Slightly less diverse groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability) →	
TENURE AS A MUSICIAN	Most with 5 - 20 years	Most with 10 - 40 years	Mix of tenure
MEMBERSHIP ORGS AND UNIONS	Similar likelihood to belong to a membership org, but relatively <u>more likely</u> to belong to a union	← Similar likelihood to belong to a membership org, but relatively <u>less likely</u> to belong to a union →	
MEDIAN INCOME (FOR FULL-TIME MUSICIANS)	Pre-pandemic: \$30,001 - 40,000 Pandemic: \$20,001 - 30,000 ↓	Pre-pandemic: \$40,001 - 50,000 Pandemic: \$20,001 - 30,000 ↓	Pre-pandemic: \$40,001 - 50,000 Pandemic: Under \$10,000 ↓
MEDIAN STREAMING INCOME	All Pre-pandemic: \$501 - 1000 Pandemic: \$251 - 500 ↓	Pre-pandemic: \$101 - 250 Pandemic: Under \$100 ↓	Pre-pandemic: \$101 - 250 Pandemic: \$101 - 250 ← →
GENERAL FINANCIAL STABILITY	About two thirds got behind on one or more expenses in three years before pandemic	About one third got behind on one or more expenses in three years before pandemic	Less than one quarter got behind on one or more expenses in three years before pandemic
PANDEMIC FINANCIAL STABILITY	Over two thirds got behind on one or more expenses in three years before pandemic	About one third got behind on one or more expenses in three years before pandemic	Less than one quarter got behind on one or more expenses in three years before pandemic
DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT	Most likely to report discrimination and harassment	← Women across all ages are more likely to report discrimination and harassment →	
TOP-OF-MIND-CHALLENGES	Marketing is most top-of-mind challenge	Streaming processes is most top-of-mind challenge	Booking gigs is most top-of-mind challenge
DESIRED CHANGES IN INDUSTRY	Interest in a variety of changes (e.g., higher pay/benefits for gigs, lodging, clean private spaces)	← Strongest, shared desire for higher pay/benefits for musicians for gigs →	

PHASE 2 | Music As A Social Good (April 2022)

Co-authored by Angharad Cooper and Shain Shapiro of Center for Music Ecosystems, Whitney Christiansen of 4AArts, and commissioned by Whippoorwill Arts.

Music is a defining tool to measure how we communicate, how we govern, who we protect, how we engage with each other and how we co-exist together in our towns, cities and places. Music is the only thing we don't need to live but can't live without.

Music is something we all share. We sing Happy Birthday to each other, attend concerts and festivals to relax and have fun, strum on a guitar and prod a piano to relieve stress and sing in choirs. And when a crisis hits, many of these acts become a source of comfort or salvation. Our balconies become stages. Webcams facilitate choirs. Music becomes a source of conviviality, a framework to keep us together when we're forced to be apart.

Music is a public good. All of us rely on it with the belief that it is always there, and always will be. It is our universal language. We all speak it. But music - no matter the genre and discipline - does not exist without musicians. To protect and expand this social good, we must recognize that if music matters, musicians matter. Plants do not fruit and thrive if the seeds are damaged when planted or not watered as they grow. The same goes for music. We must nurture the seeds so the garden is productive, or there will be nothing to eat.

To protect, grow and sustain music - in all forms and functions - it starts with supporting musicians. To do so, it is best to understand how music **is a social good**. Here is some data, demonstrating this.

Music & Health

It is known that music improves our physical and mental health. But this correlation is undervalued; direct and intentional approaches across all age groups and demographics demonstrate the social impact of music - and the opportunities inherent to invest in it and the musicians who make it happen.

- [A meta analysis of 26 studies](#) involving over 700 participants demonstrated that music supported “statistically significant and clinically proven” positive effects on mental capacity and well-being
- A study in [Frontiers in Psychology](#) found that “focal musical activity is a useful intervention in older adults to promote an enhancement in memory”
- A study for the [Alzheimer's Society](#) demonstrated that playing a musical instrument reduced the risk of early on-set dementia
- [Psychology Today](#) reported that musical training supports 5 key cognitive functions: Concentration, Self-Discipline, Self-Esteem, Empathy and Protection Against Age-Related Decline
- [20 minutes of live music increases](#) feelings of wellbeing, according to a UK Music study comparing live music with yoga and dog walking

Music & Education

Music education - at all times in our lives - is known to improve cognition, reduce stress and combat antisocial behavior. Yet, music education budgets continue to be reduced as STEM is favored over STEAM. A holistic understanding of the benefits of encouraging more of us to become musicians demonstrates the wide-spread social benefits this approach engenders.

- Early childhood musical engagement and training **has a net positive effect on language skills and comprehension**, according to the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Germany (German version of CDC)
- The National Association of Music Manufacturers (NAMM) Foundation **found that schools** with music programs had a 90.2% graduation rate, compared to schools that did not, who had a 72.9% rate
- A **National Institute of Health Study** found that music significantly decreased antisocial behavior and aggression in 44 5-7 year olds and 20 young adults (20-25 year olds). The conclusion found that “music-based intervention seemed to be more efficacious for reducing aggression and increasing self-control in children and adolescents, especially music therapy”

Music & Wealth Creation

Music creates jobs. A song can be an individual's pension. While the inequities in the commercial music sector are widespread (and will be discussed in the accompanying report), the sheer growth of the value of the global music sector is encouraging; A more nuanced understanding of how the sector functions and is evolving is required, but the simple fact that music - in and of itself - is earning more revenue than ever before, is to be welcomed and accelerated.

- The recorded music industry is growing faster than most other global sectors. Global revenues grew by **18.4% in 2021 to a total of \$25.9bn** according to the International Federation of Phonographic Industries
- Music is a net benefit to communities. In a study in Chicago's In The Loop neighborhood, for **every \$1 spent on a concert ticket** a further \$12 of economic impact was generated
- Over **\$5bn was spent** acquiring or investing in music rights (songs and copyrights) in 2021.
- Paid music streaming is forecast to grow by **19.8% in the next 5 years**
- Music instrument sales are at an all-time high

Music & Community Development

Music and musicians are part of every community. From jazz at a farmers market to a festival with global acts, music helps build and support community development. This is proven time and time again, be it during the pandemic with neighbors singing on their balconies, or music being the main event in a community parade. If musicians are centralized into community development, as is the case in a number of places (as outlined below), places - and the people who call them home - are better off for it.

- **Huntsville, Alabama's Music Board** has the same authority as any economic development or oversight board in the city, which has turned it into a serious consultant across wider city issues
- Portland, Oregon's Music Office **has introduced a seat in** city governance to represent music issues. Only a few cities have this across the United States
- Madison, Indiana's **Music City Initiative** has led to a significant increase in music tourism related investment, more than doubling live performance opportunities for local musicians

Music & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Music has a unique ability, as a social good, to cut through gender, cultural, religious and racial divides - as it is something we all experience and share. Treated intentionally, it is a tool to promote fairness and instill equity in communities. There is much work to do here, as the data below demonstrates. But in many regards, there is progress
- A [10 year study of recording studio output](#) found of all work produced, only 14.4% included women
- The [KeyChange initiative](#), a European Union funded program committing companies to gender equality has had over 500 companies join the pledge. The program has since been launched in Canada
- Over a dozen minority-led music trade associations representing diverse musicians and businesspeople have launched since 2019, including the [Black Music Action Coalition](#) and [Women in CTRL](#)
- According to the [Women in the Mix](#) study from Berklee College of Music and Arizona State University, while improvement is noted, there are mountains to climb. According to survey respondents, “Discrimination is prevalent. Eighty-four percent of respondents had faced discrimination equally across all racial identities, 77 percent felt they had been treated differently in the music industry because of their gender and over 56 percent believed their gender had affected their employment in the industry, with musicians and performers expressing this the most, at 65 percent
- A McKinsey study of Hollywood found that the cost of not diversifying cost [the film industry over \\$10bn per year](#). A similar study is being conducted for music
- Blackrock, one of the world’s largest investment funds, [has set aside \\$750m USD](#) to invest solely in female and non-binary artists, through Warner Music Group. This is one of many similar funds set up since 2020

Music & Sustainable Development

Music can help accelerate the [169 targets and 232 indicators](#) in the [17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), if included in a deliberate and intentional manner. Meeting them means realizing, investing in and acting on music as a social good. This is accelerating in a number of places, showing the transnational and community value music can generate.

- [Hamilton, Ontario](#) instituted a Fair Play for Musicians policy, ensuring all musicians hired using public funds are paid fairly (SDG #8, Decent Work & Economic Growth)
- There are a number of music & rehabilitation programs around the world in operation, including in [Colombia, the United States, The United Kingdom](#) and elsewhere (SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)
- The aforementioned [Keychange](#) program is, inch-by-inch, improving gender equality in music industry, particularly in Europe (SDG #5 Gender Equality)
- There are hundreds of examples, both in the Center for Music Ecosystems [Guide to Music and the SDGs](#) and the [Compendium for Music as a Global Resource](#), published by academics from NYU

Conclusion:

Across civic society, music produces economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. It is a tool to bring people together, build social consensus and have a good time doing so. But these benefits - each having a unique impact on our physical and mental well-being - does not exist **without musicians**. Music cannot be a social good if musicians - in terms of training, supporting, equipping, respecting and remunerating them - is not equitable. No matter the genre of discipline, each song is meaningful to someone. If we recognize music’s value to our health and wellbeing, education, wealth creation, equity and the sustainability of the planet as a whole, we will see that all ROI - economic, social, cultural and environmental - involves investing in musicians.

PHASE 3 | Music Industry Primer: How the Music Industry Works & its Impact on Musicians (October 2022)

Co-authored by Angharad Cooper and Shain Shapiro of Center for Music Ecosystems, Whitney Christiansen of 4AArts, and commissioned by Whippoorwill Arts.

1.0 Introduction

This report outlines the current structure and economic realities of the commercial music industry in the United States, with a particular focus on live performance and its impact on working musicians. It outlines and evidences the current status of the music industry as it relates to musicians themselves, including special populations.

In order to outline as clear and fair a picture as possible, this work only references verifiable data. However, due to the inadequacies of federal data collection systems when it comes to accurately reporting on gig workers as a whole and those who take part in the creative economy specifically, our picture remains incomplete.

Key Findings

- The music industry is widespread and provides a significant boost to the American economy, with recorded music growing in popularity even amidst the disruption the pandemic has caused to creative industries as a whole
- Musicians derive their income from a diverse constellation of employment, including revenue from live performances, recording, royalties, and other supporting roles within the industry
- Much information is missing to provide a clear image of the true state of musicians' lives
 - The Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis have failed to keep up with the changing form of American employment. Gig workers of all kinds are under- and mis-represented in the data, but musicians may fall through the cracks to a greater extent than most due to their diversified revenue and fluid transitions between full- and part-time
 - Because live music so often intersects with the food and beverage industry, it is difficult to parse revenues from establishments that earn income from a variety of methods, and income from live music may be misreported under other categories
- Income inequality skews much of the data; with a small percentage of very high earners at the top and a system that relies on averages, income often appears much higher for musicians than in reality
- While wages for those in the music industry appeared to rise post-pandemic, in reality wages either remained flat; significant gains by the top earners contort the data
- More than income remains unequal; gaps appear when the available data is broken down into specific populations, with more marginalized populations reporting higher levels of discrimination and harassment, and a correlating lower income
- Prior to the pandemic, live music was the most common income source for musicians, but most data and reporting has yet to measure COVID-19's impact on musical live performance

2.0 The Music Industry

The music industry means different things to different people. It would be truer to state that there are multiple music industries that are split by genre, discipline, function, or sector. Those who make instruments for musicians, for example, rarely interact with music publishers. Some artists are embedded in a labyrinthine system where they collaborate with managers, agents, publishers, marketers, and other professionals. Others do much of the work themselves, which is mislabeled as DIY (as not everything can be done completely by oneself). As a result, there are services available at all levels of the sector, although some are of benefit to musicians and others, less so.

At the heart of the industry, however, are the musicians; there is no music industry without them. And it is live performance that drives both musicians and their fans.

2.1 Music Industry Revenues

No matter what they play, where they play, or how often they play, understanding this ecosystem is vital for all musicians to protect themselves and their income. As a result, it is imperative for Whippoorwill Arts to understand the current state of the music industry, including its pain points, in order to address them. The following statistics are intended to provide an overview of the industry as a whole, before we turn to how the actual music makers fit within this industry.

- In 2018, the music industry contributed \$170 billion to the U.S. economy and directly or indirectly supported 2.47 million jobs, accounting for 0.9% of the U.S. GDP and 1.7% of its employment
- By comparison, the motor vehicle industry contributed \$162.4 billion to the GDP ([RIAA, 2020](#))

- [50 States of Music](#) is an interactive website offering data on the economic and cultural impact of music in each state, created in collaboration by the American Association of Independent Music (A2IM), the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), Global Music Rights (GMR), the National Independent Venues Association (NIVA), the National Music Publishers Association (NMPA), the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), SESAC, and SoundExchange. It is incomplete as it reports statewide and not locally, and it focused on revenues related to royalties, but it is a good snapshot of the sector.
 - For example, NYC’s music ecosystem supports nearly 60,000 jobs, \$5 billion in wages, and a total economic output of \$21 billion, outpacing the rest of the city’s job and wage growth ([NYC MOME, 2017](#))

Live Music

In 2019, income from attendance at live events reached an all-time high of \$38.4 billion, dropping to \$7.7 billion in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic ([FRED/U.S. Census](#)).

According to the [Inaugural Music Industry Research Association \(MIRA\) Survey of Musicians Executive Summary](#), in 2018, the average American musician found their “most common income source [to be] live performances, followed by music lessons and performing in a church choir or other religious service” (p. 1).

Much of the data on live music is out-of-date due to the disruption of the pandemic, or unavailable as of yet, and few research outlets have begun to tackle the enormous task of assessing its current state. However, some information has begun to emerge.

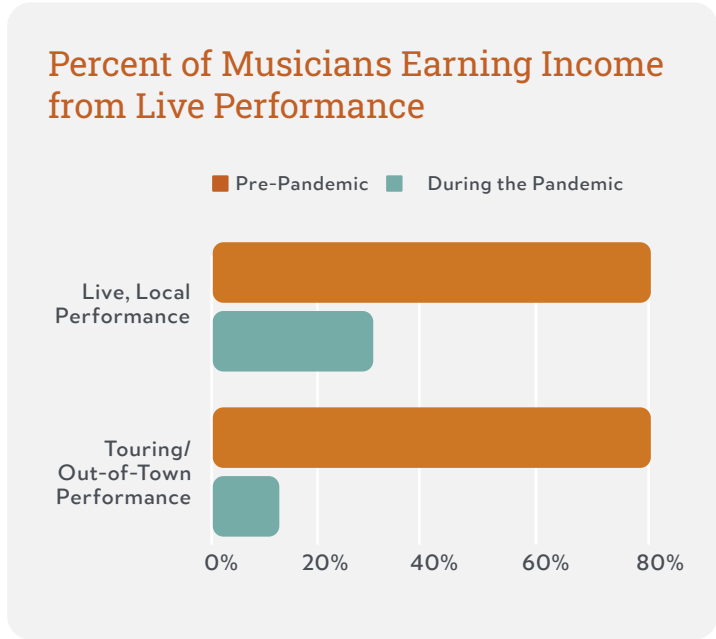
- Admissions to live entertainment, excluding sports, fell from an all-time high in 2019 of \$38.4 billion to \$7.7 billion in 2021 ([FRED/U.S. Census](#))
- “Revenues from live music slumped by 74.4% in 2020 and are expected to return to 2019 levels only in 2023...But between 2020 and 2025, the music sector as a whole is expected to grow at a 12.8% CAGR, fuelled by rapid growth in both live performances and digital streaming, which will be a US\$29.3bn business in 2025” ([PWC, p. 10](#))

Perhaps most striking, “[f]ans pay around 80 times more per minute for a real-world live performance than they do for listening to music on paid streaming services. The value exists in the shared moment” ([MIDiA Research, 2020](#)), proving that live performance has a value that resides in an experience that cannot be replicated in the virtual or digital space.

Released in 2022, [NIVA’s Music Venue Economic Impact Calculator](#) can allow musicians and venue owners a tool to calculate the amount of revenue live performance brings to their area.

While live music may have slumped during the first two years of the pandemic, it is poised to return.

Prior to the pandemic, live music was the most common income source for musicians ([MIRA Musician Survey](#)) but data is still being gathered to discover whether that remains true. In Whippoorwill Arts’ previous research on grassroots musicians, respondents reported a significant drop: prior to the pandemic, over 80% of musicians reported earning income from live, local performance, while only 29% reported the same in 2021.



“Just like a financial economy, the attention economy is capped. It’s the amount of “screen time” people are prepared to spend. Most people already utilize the amount of screen time they are comfortable with, which means virtual concerts are not only forcing fans to choose some artists over others, but also competing with TikTok or that Jamie Oliver recipe video for their attention. People aren’t all that prepared to give up their favorite non-music content to binge on livestreams”

[Howard, 2021](#)

Recorded Music

Recorded music values have continued to increase since 2014, when revenues for all recorded music hit their lowest point (inflation-adjusted) since the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) began collecting data in 1973, rising from \$6.7 billion to \$15 billion in 2021, a 23% year-over-year growth from 2020 ([RIAA](#)).

- Wholesale music revenues were up 22% overall, reaching \$9.8 billion. ([RIAA](#))
- All formats of music grew in value except for digital downloads, with paid (streaming) subscriptions in the lead

Music Sync

Non-DSP (digital streaming provider) platforms such as TikTok, Snap, Peloton, Twitch, or Facebook parent Meta accounted for \$1.5 billion in total global revenue in 2021 ([Mulligan, MIDiA](#)).

Total synchronization royalties in 2021 amounted to \$302.9 million, a 14.2% increase over 2020 ([RIAA](#)).

Physical Products

Vinyl and CD sales grew for the first time since 1986 and 2004, respectively.

- “For the first time since 1996, both CDs and vinyl records experienced revenue growth in the same year. The resurgence in vinyl records continued for the 15th consecutive year, as revenues grew 61% to \$1.0 billion in 2021. The last time vinyl records exceeded \$1 billion was 1986. Vinyl accounted for 63% of revenues from physical formats, and 7% of total music revenues. Revenues from CDs rebounded from 2020, when Covid-19 significantly impacted retail as many stores were closed and tours were suspended or canceled. In 2021, revenues from CDs grew 21% to \$584 million, the first year-over-year increase in CD revenues since 2004” ([RIAA](#))

Digital Downloads

Digitally-downloaded music declined 12% from 2020.

- “Downloads accounted for just 4% of U.S. recorded music revenues in 2021, down from a peak of 43% of revenues in 2012” ([RIAA](#))

Streaming

Streaming music accounted for 83% of recorded music revenues in 2021 (this includes synced music that streams alongside apps such as TikTok, Facebook, fitness apps, and more) ([RIAA](#)).

- Paid subscriptions were the largest share of streaming revenue
- The average number of paid subscriptions grew 11% from 2020-2021 and 39% from 2019-2021
 - Paid subscription revenue grew 40% from 2019-2021 ([RIAA](#))

The Value of Royalties

- In 2020, music copyright was valued at an estimated \$32.5 billion ([Page, Tarzan Economics](#))
- While an estimated **\$5.05bn was spent acquiring music rights** in 2020, the vast majority of those funds went to heritage artists selling their back catalog

2.2 Music Rights & Royalties

Plain and simple, outside of performing live, this is where musicians make their money. While not all music rights become financially lucrative, those that prove valuable can create generational wealth. A song can become a pension and they have done so for tens of thousands of musicians and their families. However, many other musicians are not receiving revenue on music that they have written or performed, either because that music is financially worthless (because no one is listening) or worse: many duly deserved proceeds fail to reach musicians because of data misappropriation.

The Structure of United States Copyright

There are two major kinds of rights:

Master rights are the rights to a finished sound recording of a piece of music, and are typically owned by recording artists and record labels.

Composition rights cover the harmony, melody, and lyrics of a piece of music, and are typically owned by songwriters and music publishers.

Essentially, there is a writer for every track, who owns the composition rights, and a performer for each track, who owns the master rights - but these rightsholders could be multiple people or even whole companies.

There are 6 rights, commonly referred to as neighboring rights, that are triggered when a track is assigned metadata and uploaded to an aggregator to be distributed:

- **Reproduction:** Considered to be the most important of the rights, the right to reproduction allows the owner the ability to make a copy of the work
- **Distribution:** This right allows the owner to control the work's sale or transfer to others
- **Derivative Works:** This right allows the owner to create new works based on the

original, such as turning a novel into a screenplay or a film

- **Public Performance:** This right controls the ability to perform the work in a public place or one which is transmitted to multiple locations
- **Public Display:** This right allows owners the ability to display a visual work like a photograph or still image from a film in a public place (such as a website)
- **Digital Transmission:** This right enables owners to license their audio for digital transmission (for example, to a streaming service,) and is exclusive to sound recordings

Within each of the 6 triggered rights, there are multiple revenue pathways, with a number of parties and companies involved in the transaction. These may include composition, recording, album, remix, mash-up, karaoke, cover song, music video, demo, and many more. This is made ever more complicated by how ownership of each particular right can differ depending on the year and the country. What follows is a brief overview of the structure of music royalties in the U.S.

The Structure of Music Royalties

Performance Royalties

Performance royalties are collected when a song is performed in a public place, **defined by ASCAP** as “one that occurs either in a public place where people gather (other than a small circle of a family or social acquaintances). A public performance is also one that is transmitted to the public, for example, radio or TV broadcasts, and via the Internet.” They must be paid when music is played in restaurants, amusement parks, airports, fitness centers, retail stores, and many other public places, and owners of these establishments must apply for a license. They do not have to be paid for performances within not-for-profit (face to face) educational or religious institutions.

It is the business owner, not the musician or performer, who is responsible for obtaining permission to play songs, but musicians have a responsibility to provide a setlist in advance to aid in this process.

Mechanical Royalties

Mechanical royalties apply to the physical or digital distribution of a work. “While performance royalties are paid for the right to play a composition in public, mechanical royalties are paid for the right to reproduce a composition through the process of recording, manufacturing, and distributing the work” ([Soundcharts](#)). However, these rights do NOT apply to distribution over AM/FM radio, despite the fact that [until 2021, radio was the most popular way Americans listened to music](#), and still remains second only to digital streaming.

Mechanical royalties have been in the judicial spotlight in recent years: the Music Modernization Act of 2018 created [The Mechanical Licensing Collective \(The MLC\)](#), a nonprofit organization designed to collect mechanical royalties from digital streaming providers.

In early 2018, the U.S. Copyright Royalty Board ruled that digital music providers like Spotify and Apple must increase their mechanical royalty payments by 44% over five years (2018 - 2022). That decision was appealed, leaving providers free to continue paying 2017 rates (10.5%), while artists and music publishers would have received up to 15.1% more under the original ruling ([Stassen](#)).

However, another ruling, Phonorecords IV, may have important implications for the next round of lobbying for digital music royalties, however. Rightsholders are arguing for a raise on the mechanical rate paid to publishers and songwriters for music purchased in a physical format such as CD, vinyl, etc. The rate has been frozen at \$0.091 since 2006, when it was raised due to inflation and rises in cost of living. If the same argument holds in the present day for physical formats, it may set a precedent for digital ones, as well ([Ingham](#)).

Currently, within the U.S., no performance or mechanical royalties are paid for music played on AM/FM radio stations, a situation unique to the States. [According to SoundExchange](#), this 100-year-old loophole costs musicians (and their labels) \$200 million annually, though lobbyists behind the [2021 American Music Fairness Act](#) hope to close it. (Digital radio such as SiriusXM is covered under a separate category, and receives performance royalties.)

Sync

In short, “[s]ync licensing fees are paid out when music is synchronized to any other type of content, including video content for ads, TV shows, movies, video games, and – though this is pretty rare – audio-only sync” ([Soundcharts](#)). These other forms are often labeled “non-DSP (digital streaming provider)” platforms, and include providers like Facebook, Peloton, TikTok, and Twitch.

Sync fees are only paid out for “the prominent and intentional use of compositions or masters as an integral part of a broadcasted piece of content. So, a song played at random during a live broadcast does not require a sync agreement, but if the song is inserted intentionally by the producers, then a sync deal is required” ([Soundcharts](#)).

Streaming

Streaming royalties are paid out any time a song is played on a digital streaming platform such as Spotify, Apple Music, Google Play, or many others.

In the U.S., royalties are currently divided between interactive, “on demand” streaming, where listeners choose their content, and non-interactive, “internet radio.” Non-interactive platforms like SiriusXM pay performing rights organizations (PROs) like [ASCAP](#), [BMI](#), and [SESAC](#) to collect and distribute performance royalties to songwriters, composers, and publishers, while [SoundExchange](#) does the same for the artist and the sound recording copyright owner.

Revenue from interactive streams is divided between mechanical royalties paid when the song is played, performance royalties for the right to host the song, and payouts to the owners of the master recordings (which makes up the bulk, typically quoted around 70%.) The same PROs handle performance royalties, while the [Harry Fox Agency](#) collects and distributes mechanical royalties.

However, while [economist Will Page estimates the total value of music copyright in 2020 alone at \\$32.5 billion](#), these royalties rarely amount to living wages for the average working musician or songwriter.

3.0 The Music Revenue Pie: What Cuts Into Artists’ Portion?

3.1 Payouts to Others

Live Music

While there are no set percentages taken off an artist or musician’s fees, many deductions impact the net revenue an artist receives to perform.

If the artist has a booking agent, 10% is deducted off the top.

- If an artist has management, 20% is dedicated from the remaining 90%
- Typical [buy-on costs](#) range between \$5,000 and \$30,000 for a 10-15 date tour
- A promoter can offer a number of different arrangements, including:
 - Set fee performance
 - Door deal
 - Set fee plus additional door revenue above a certain threshold
 - A split of revenue and the door, depending on which one is higher
 - Package deal (for multiple performances)
 - Per band member fee
 - Fee per hour or allotted time
 - Union scale fee
- Some venues charge commission to staff or allocate space for merchandise, which can be between 10% and 25% of total revenue. A campaign in the UK, [led by the Featured Artist Coalition](#) seeks to end this practice, but it has yet to gain traction in the United

States. It is important that musicians ask ahead to understand each venue's practice and if they charge a commission, to consider negotiating it down

- Many small venues do not report setlists to the required PRO, instead opting to pay a blanket fee (based on a sliding scale of the size and footfall of the venue). Artists must submit setlists themselves to ensure the correct performing rights are attributed to each performance. This often does not happen, despite most [PROs having a setlist reporting tool](#)

Overhead, Management, and Administration

Overhead costs cut into music makers' revenue, though many smaller musicians and music groups may fulfill many of these roles themselves. A [2018 report by Citigroup](#) estimated that managers received 15-20% of a band's earnings, but those costs were deducted AFTER "the cost to record the album, fees paid to the producer, payments made to those that co-write the song, and the costs of the opening act (when a band tours)" (p. 13). In addition, many musicians must also pay:

- Agents, who receive "5-10% of the revenues associated with concerts, commercials, and TV appearances. They do not collect fees from the sales of recorded music" (p. 14)
- Record Producers, who are typically paid a fee based on the units of recorded music sold, but often must be paid a certain amount before the artists can see any further revenue (p. 14)
- Costs associated with touring, video production and audio recording, marketing, and promotion. If a band or musician manages to sign with a record label, the label will often pay for these services. But independent musicians pay for them on their own, as well as the costs of business managers and attorneys, out of their own pockets (p. 32)

Physical Products

- When a physical product like a CD is sold in a store, retailers retain approximately 30% of the revenue
- From there, if the musician is performing work by another songwriter, 10% is removed for mechanical royalties
- After that, the music maker receives a percentage of the gross revenue, depending on the contract signed with the label, typically somewhere between 12-20%
- But from these earnings, the label will collect 10% under the assumption that a percentage of the music was given away as "free goods" and another 25% to cover the costs of manufacturing, while the record producer collects an additional 3% ([Citigroup](#), p. 33-34)

Citigroup went on to explain that a 4-member band selling 200,000 CDs at \$17.98 each over the course of three years would receive an annual pre-tax income of \$37,000 per band member per year if they had no other revenue than CD sales. Meanwhile, "only 0.5% of albums released in 2011 sold more than 10,000 copies" ([p. 34](#)).

Nevertheless, the report describes how "a record label probably loses money on the vast majority of new contracts it signs. But, the labels are willing to do this because a handful of artists are very, very lucrative to the labels" ([p. 34](#)).

Royalties

There are innumerable ways that a music publishing, or music rights arrangement can be coordinated for a musician depending on if they are the songwriter, a performer on the song, or a publisher who has purchased a back catalog.

Streaming

When an artist is signed to a label, the label receives around 70% of the gross value of the

stream (30% is retained by the digital service provider (DSP),) of which a percentage is deducted by the aggregator. Then, depending on the contractual agreement and type of right, the net payment is distributed to the artist, minus management fees. The average amount left over, for every \$1 earned from the rights, is estimated to be between \$0.15 and \$0.20. According to the [House of Commons' Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's 2021 "Economics of music streaming" report](#), the only review of music streaming ever completed in the UK, it breaks down thus:

From the royalty pot, the majority of revenue goes to the master rightsholders, who receive approximately 55 percent of the gross revenue pot. Song rightsholders therefore receive the remainder, amounting to approximately 15 percent of the gross revenue pot. Put in terms of the royalty pot, the master rightsholders therefore receive approximately 78.5 percent of the revenues that accrue to the music industry rightsholders, whereas song rightsholders receive approximately 21.5 percent (p. 21).

Spotify, in particular, is careful to note that it does not pay artists directly; instead, ([after taking approximately \\$0.30 for every dollar first,](#)) it pays the rightsholders, who are then responsible for paying out those royalties to the artists. In addition, even those rightsholders are not paid on a per-stream basis: "the rightsholder's share of net revenue is determined by streamshare. We calculate streamshare by tallying the total number of streams in a given month and determining what proportion of those streams were people listening to music owned or controlled by a particular rightsholder" ([Spotify](#)).

As a result, unless an artist owns both sides to their music (if they are the songwriter), it is difficult to create additional revenues through streaming, because there are too many deductions down the chain.

Nevertheless, a look at pay rates from not just Spotify but all the major streaming platforms reveals the immense amounts of music a listener would have to consume in order to provide a musician with even a month's paycheck at minimum wage.

Between 15 and 20 cents.
That's the estimated
average amount left over for
musicians, for every \$1 earned
from streaming rights.

Dimensionalizing Streaming Pay Rates

Platform	Pay per stream	Streams needed to reach \$1256.67*	Hours of music streamed**
Napster	\$0.019	66,140	3,858
TIDAL	\$0.0125	100,534	5,865
Apple Music	\$0.01	125,667	7,331
Deezer	\$0.0064	196,355	11,454
Amazon Music	\$0.00402	312,605	18,235
Spotify	\$0.0037**	339,641	19,812
Pandora	\$0.00133	944,865	55,117
YouTube	\$0.00069	1,821,261	106,240

* 1 month's wages at federal minimum wage level

** Hours of music listeners would need to stream for an artist to reach minimum wage, with songs averaging 3 minutes, 30 seconds. (Kopf, 2019)

*** Varies per artist, but ranges between \$0.003 - \$0.005. \$0.0037 is the average amount paid across artists. (Digital Music News)

In their [previous report](#) created in collaboration with Slover-Linett, Whippoorwill Arts explored musicians' feelings on streaming. One musician responded with disdain: "Streaming is a joke."

Bandcamp and Web3

There are more avenues for artists to retain more of their net revenues now. The most popular is Bandcamp, where the artist decides what to sell and for how much, with every track, full albums of live shows available on the platform. Bandcamp has distributed over [\\$500m to artists](#) and charges a flat fee for the service (\$10 or \$20 per month). A number of artists have also utilized Web3 enabled services to monetize aspects of their catalogue, such as tracks or images. Having 100 or 500 fans signed up to a subscription service such as a particular Discord server, or a Patreon,

has enabled a number of mid-level artists to increase their net earnings. But this requires time, dedication and knowledge of the platform. These skills need to be developed on top of one's music and may be out of reach to many artists. There are a significant amount of opportunities in Web3 to create more varied products around music, much like a traditional fan club did in the 1970s and 1980s. But to maximize this, an artist must have a subsection of listeners willing to invest in them. There is a sub section of the music industry dedicated to this, creating platforms aimed to support artists who are focused on convincing 100 fans to pay \$10 a month, rather than work to accrue 200,000 streams a month. Most of these artists focus on SoundCloud and Bandcamp, as well as Web3 enabled services, like Serenade or Colors.

4.0 The Data Gap

4.1 Failures In Federal Reporting

In 2017, the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) reported that 34.8% of musicians held a second job, and musicians counted more moonlighters in their numbers than any other category of artist.

With at least a third of musicians holding multiple jobs, it becomes imperative to understand that much of musicians' income is not accurately reported, meaning that the true nature of average earnings may be far off from what we see in federal and other statistics. In particular, census data often does not cover part-time employment, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not study self-employed workers, though artists are over three times more likely to be self-employed than other workers (NEA).

As a result, many musicians may be left out of data altogether, further contributing to the drift towards statistics that reflect a rosier picture than the reality of many real music workers' lives.

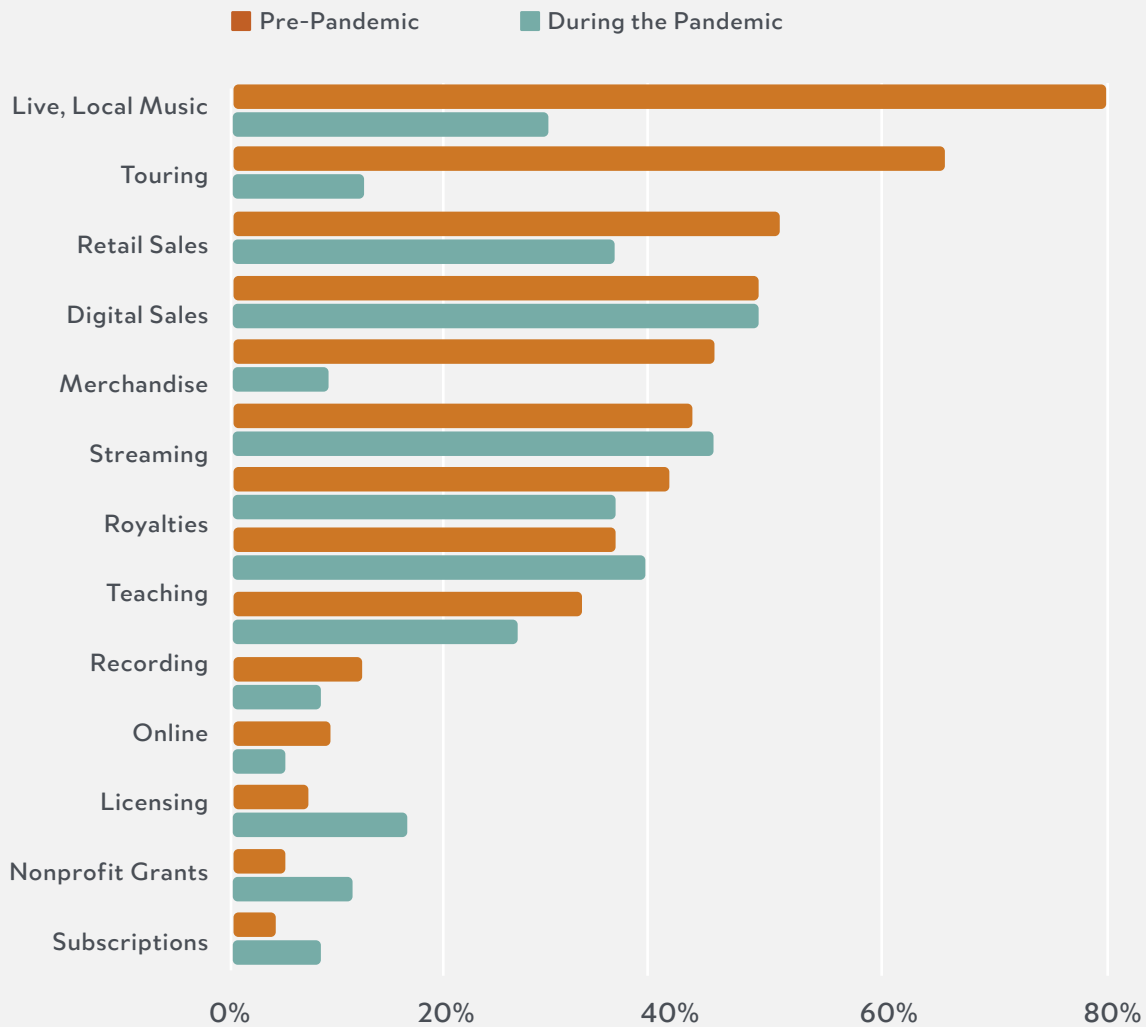
In fact, there is no national database that tracks the percentage of income that creatives make from their diverse income streams. The current format of census and employment data means that respondents are forced into reporting in one category, either part-time or full-time

(depending on the survey,) and from there, all income is attributed to a single occupation. This means that, in the case of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, music teachers are reported under "Education," while musical instrument repair specialists are reported as "Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations." Musical artist managers and agents are reported in the same category as sports agents, preventing researchers from establishing how much income agents are truly making, and when revenue from live performances is made at an establishment that serves food or alcohol, that income is reported as belonging to the restaurant and hospitality industry.

However, it is a rare musician who only wears one hat. In fact, 61.7% of musicians derived income from at least three different music revenue streams prior to the pandemic, according to previous work by Whippoorwill Arts and Slover-Linett, and over a third of them earned music income in at least five different methods, including teaching, retail sales, streaming, licensing, live performance and more. By far the greatest number of musicians earned income from live, local performance, at 80.2%. (During the pandemic, less than a third of musicians earned income from playing live locally, and touring performance dropped from 65% of music income earners to 12%.)

In 2017, the National Endowment for the Arts reported that 34.8% of musicians held a second job

Percent of Musicians Earning Income from Diverse Streams



4.2 Appearances Can Be Deceptive

According to the [Inaugural Music Industry Research Association \(MIRA\) Survey of Musicians Executive Summary](#), in 2018, the average American musician:

- Earned between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year (p. 1)
- Found their “most common income source [to be] live performances, followed by music lessons and performing in a church choir or other religious service...[but] Sixty-one percent of musicians said that their music-related income is not sufficient to meet their living expenses” (p. 1)
- Spent 14.13 hours of work each week performing, 5.7 traveling, 4.37 composing, 3.6 giving lessons, and 7.85 on other non-music work (p. 19)

Final demand earnings, which include not just wages but also insurance, pensions, and other benefits, grew a total of 16.4% in the overall music industry from 2015-2018. Final demand employment grew even faster, at 18.5%.

- However, this gap between the rates of growth suppressed wages and created an overall -1.7% dampening effect on earnings in the same time period. Average annual wages fell from \$36,454 in 2015 to \$35,824 in 2018 ([RIAA, p. 16-18](#))
 - These new jobs do not appear to have gone to actual musicians, however, but rather to other occupations within the music industry. While overall employment within the music industry increased, actual artist employment fell: “The number of people employed as Musicians, singers, & related workers has been declining at a rate of -3.94%, from 143,694 people in 2016 to 138,038 people in 2017” ([Data.io](#))

In short, while the overall picture looks rosy, with both income and employment on the rise for the music industry, in reality musicians themselves are worse off than ever.

4.3 Income Inequality: Skewing The Data

“In most forms of entertainment, the artist captures the lion’s share of the spoils. But, because the music industry has so many intermediaries – and because the consumption of music is so fragmented across various platforms – the artist captures very little of the aggregate revenues. Over the last 20 years, the artist’s share of the industry’s revenues has hovered between 7% and 12%” ([Citigroup, p. 62](#)).

While the recovery of the music industry since 2020 is certainly to be celebrated, overall statistics about the economic health of the music business should be viewed with an eye towards discerning how averages may not reflect the majority of music workers’ lives.

Though the music industry may have turned a \$15 billion dollar profit in 2021, musicians and artists have been struggling financially since long before the pandemic, and continue to do so. Job creation and rises in average (or mean) wages are hailed as markers of success. But appearances can be deceiving.

When comparing mean income to median income, a startling effect begins to emerge. Averages can be skewed by a few outliers, as with Spotify’s small number of high earners. But median, as the middle value, offers a more accurate measure of a given range of incomes. And when you compare the gap between the two, it becomes clear that income inequality affects the ability of data to accurately depict the current status of music workers’ lives.

While the following tables do not cover all music occupations by any means, they are intended to grant an overview of the largest branches of the music industry, including not only musicians and singers, but also the educators that teach the next generation, the agents and managers, the technicians who mix sound, and those who repair instruments so that the music can keep playing. The tables compare their wages (and later, employment) against overall wages within their larger occupational and industry classifications.

While overall, income inequality is high in the U.S., in most occupations that are adjacent to music-making (with the exception of agents, which also includes those that represent athletes,) mean and median income are closer than overall U.S. rates. But for those music workers who are closest to the art of music itself - musicians and singers, and music directors and composers - the difference makes up a quarter of their income.

The [GINI index](#) is a method of tracking income inequality, with a GINI coefficient of 1 signifying perfect equality and a coefficient of 0 indicating that only one individual receives the income. In 2015, the national GINI coefficient was 0.478, while musicians, singers, and related workers had a wage GINI coefficient of 0.597 ([Data.io](#)).

It's not just high earners on the national stage that affect reporting; some regions or metropolitan areas may skew the data, as well. For example, [Nashville, TN reported](#) a 2016 mean annual wage for musical groups and artists of \$172,337 (NAICS 711130;) the national mean was \$68,348 (SOC 27-2040). ([BLS](#))

Recording and streaming companies also contribute to music industry income inequality: Sony, Warner, and Universal made \$1 million every hour from streaming in 2019 ([MBW](#)). Meanwhile, the 1% of artists that make up 90% of Spotify's revenue earn an average of \$29,046 a year from the site (only the top 1,000 make more.) The other 99% of musicians that stream on Spotify make approximately \$26 annually ([MIDIa](#)).

4.4 Income Inequality On The Stage

[According to the late economist Paul Krueger](#), "In 1982, 26% of all concert revenue from ticket sales went to the top 1% of performers. By contrast, in 2019 the top 1% now commands a whopping 60% of revenue." This has been exacerbated by COVID. According to research from Will Page, former Chief Economist of Spotify, between 2012 and 2019, concerts held at arenas and stadiums gained \$750 million in total revenue, while venues in small to mid-sized music venues lost \$25 million in box office revenue in the UK (where this data was compiled).

Additionally, the share of concerts in arenas and stadiums, compared to total concerts reported

to the United Kingdom's Performing Rights Society and reported by [Will Page from Tarzan Economics shows that](#) these types of events now represent 40% of the total market in the UK, up from 23% in 2012. In the UK, for example, just 7 events accounted for 10% of the total revenue in live in 2019. This shows that the pipeline of live music is becoming more like an hourglass. This stretches the prospective fees that smaller venues are able to offer working musicians, because there are less shows (due to covid, but trending downwards for over a decade) and less audience. This is further exacerbated by changing tastes in terms of how people, especially young people, are discovering music. Many artists find success on TikTok first, for example, and then their first live performance is at a festival. [While this is changing](#), it creates further challenges to the availability and health of the grassroots live market.

However, it must be said that there are different realities depending on where one lives and the genre they play. There are more grassroots opportunities in certain genres of country music, or within the Christian music community through touring churches than there are for singer-songwriters, classical violinists or emerging rappers. Regional touring circuits, such as the Texas new country scene operate independently with their own venues, promoters and infrastructure. So it is important for musicians to understand the ecosystem they are functioning within, as that will dictate the opportunities available to them.

4.5 The Pandemic Effect

It is estimated that between 5% and 10% of total working musicians before the COVID-19 pandemic, toured professionally, which is estimated via discussions during this research with agents and management companies. However,

most acts operate or work for businesses that do not offer healthcare or other benefits, which would have to be deducted on top of earnings. When touring halted due to COVID, this proved disastrous to many musicians. By late September, 2020 it was estimated that [nearly half of all musicians left](#) the profession, and those estimates were very nearly accurate; by the end of 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 41.5% of U.S. musicians and singers were no longer employed in that category.

Moreover, with few governments adequately supporting the self employed, these challenges exacerbated. In Nashville, for example, their latest economic impact report found that [74% of musicians said they had experienced unemployment since March 2020 and saw their annual income plunge by \\$10,000 to below \\$36,000 a year.](#) Some of the sector has bounced back since, but not in an equitable way, with different circumstances and results, depending on where one lives, the music they play, the availability of venues, and their own financial situation, as many musicians have had to dedicate time to other jobs, thereby reducing their time to work on their music.

This is complicated by the rising cost of living, including inflation and the cost of fuel. An artist must have transportation to be able to tour, and most often that transport is a car fuelled by petrol or diesel. Hotels, food and servicing equipment costs are rising, which is forcing some artists to reconsider touring. Little Simz, a UK rapper, [canceled her US tour](#) due to rising costs that she could not cover, for example.

And when climate implications are factored in, it adds further complexity. Coldplay may be able to [offset their tour](#), but most artists, especially those performing locally or regionally, lack the resources to do that without agent or

management support and are stuck with the infrastructure that exists at each venue. There are some ways to mitigate this, such as demanding [green riders](#) (if one gets a rider) and auditing one's carbon, but this costs time and money. Most musicians lack both.

The immense disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected national reporting on music employment and income, and the impacts are only just now beginning to be studied. Until the economy and health system of the U.S. stabilize, it will be difficult to accurately assess or predict the future of music, whether live or recorded.

4.6 Inequality: More Than Income

While federal data fails to allow us to parse out income with more detail, other institutions have stepped up to the plate, giving us a more nuanced glimpse into specific populations within the music industry.

In their 2021 report, Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future, Whippoorwill Arts previously partnered with research firm Slover-Linett to probe grassroots musicians for the input on the current state of musicians' lives, income, and opportunities. Cross-referencing their data allows us to explore how race, gender, sexuality, and ability may affect one's income, and also grants us access to how professional protections may or may not be doing their job to prevent discrimination and harassment within the industry.

Turn Up the Mic's data revealed that of those musicians who considered their music to be more than a hobby, 24.6% made less than \$10,000/year from music (from 2017-2019.) While the U.S. median household income in 2019 was \$69,560, only 25% of those musicians who made their entire income from music

made \$70k or more a year, meaning that three-fourths of full-time musicians are making below the average U.S. annual wage.

Professional Protections

According to Whipoorwill Arts and Slover-Linett, 19% of musicians were without health insurance, “66% did not have retirement funds, 85% did not have unemployment insurance, 86% did not have any sort of paid leave, 85% did not have disability insurance, and 85% did not have mental health coverage.” In addition, only 19.6% of all respondents replied that they received formal professional protections against discrimination or harassment.

But those professional protections are no guarantee that such discrimination doesn’t take place, and a closer look at the data reveals that (not unexpectedly,) marginalized populations are highly at risk for harassment, regardless of whether they have official pathways to prevent it.

While 73.0% of those who reported experiencing harassment or discrimination had no professional protections in place to prevent it, even those who were offered protections still faced discrimination.

Harassment and Discrimination by Race

	Reported experiencing discrimination or harassment	Had professional protections in place to prevent discrimination	Had been discriminated against with no professional protections in place	Had been discriminated against even though protections were in place
Black	64.2%	18.2%	53.1%	11.1%
East Asian	40.9%	27.3%	22.7%	18.2%
Indigenous	51.0%	32.7%	32.7%	18.4%
Latinx or Hispanic	41.5%	15.1%	34.0%	7.5%
Middle Eastern/ Arabic	50.0%	27.3%	31.8%	18.2%
Hawai’ian/ Pacific Islander	58.8%	29.4%	41.2%	17.6%
South Asian	41.7%	16.7%	41.7%	0.0%
White	32.2%	20.5%	23.2%	9.1%
Other	36.4%	11.4%	29.5%	6.8%

Harassment and Discrimination by Gender

	Reported experiencing discrimination or harassment	Had professional protections in place to prevent discrimination	Had been discriminated against with no professional protections in place	Had been discriminated against even though protections were in place
Men	22.7%	18.8%	15.6%	7.1%
Women	57.3%	23.2%	42.5%	14.8%
Non-binary	75.0%	6.3%	68.8%	6.3%

Harassment and Discrimination by Sexual Orientation

	Reported experiencing discrimination or harassment	Had professional protections in place to prevent discrimination	Had been discriminated against with no professional protections in place	Had been discriminated against even though protections were in place
Heterosexual	33.0%	19.7%	24.1%	8.9%
Gay/ Lesbian	46.9%	14.3%	38.8%	8.2%
Bisexual	62.3%	24.5%	43.4%	18.9%
Pansexual	63.6%	27.3%	36.4%	27.3%
No Label	38.7%	27.4%	24.2%	14.5%
Other	70.0%	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%

Harassment and Discrimination by Disability Status

	Reported experiencing discrimination or harassment	Had professional protections in place to prevent discrimination	Had been discriminated against with no professional protections in place	Had been discriminated against even though protections were in place
Disabled	69.6%	40.6%	34.1%	35.5%

While in every category, there were those who had been discriminated against despite established professional protections, some populations stand out as particularly at risk. In at least two categories - non-binary individuals and those that reported being pansexual - all of the respondents who reported having formal protections in place still experienced harassment or discrimination regardless. Black, non-binary, bisexual, pansexual, those who described their sexual orientation as “other,” and disabled musicians all faced extremely high rates of discrimination above 60%, while white musicians, men, and heterosexual individuals faced the lowest rates.

Overall, 36.3% reported having experienced discrimination or harassment while working in the music industry. Harassment or discrimination was

positively correlated with lower income; of those who reported harassment, 18.1% made less than \$10,000/year, and another 18.1% made between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Two-thirds of musicians who experiencing discrimination made less than \$40,000 a year, while more than half of those who were not subjected to discrimination made more than \$40,000 annually. Considering those reporting discrimination were overwhelmingly among marginalized populations, this means that those facing marginalization in the social sphere are also losing out on income compared to their more privileged peers.

The question remains - why did these professional protections fail?

2/3 of musicians who experiencing discrimination made less than \$40,000 a year

Unions: A Mixed Bag

Upon first analysis, it would appear that the initial solution to problems of low pay and failing professional protections would be the purview of musicians' unions, as historically in the United States, working conditions have been addressed by such. However, the gig economy in general and the music industry more specifically, contain elements that make reliance on labor unions fraught with difficulty.

Like other gig workers, musicians are typically on the move and lack eligibility for minimum wage requirements, sick or family leave, workers compensation, or health insurance. United States union law traditionally centers around conditions at individual work sites rather than industry-wide concerns, leaving workers with overlapping issues little choice but to fight their battles on a company-by-company basis instead of reaping the benefits of broader collective bargaining.

Unions themselves have found themselves in steady decline in the U.S., with 2022 marking the lowest point in union membership rates in the country's history. **Only 10.1%** of American workers counted themselves in the union ranks last year, down from **30.9% in 1960**. Fewer members, combined with the passing of "right-to-work" laws in 27 states (legislation that prevents unions or workplaces from requiring workers to join unions or pay dues), and rapid offshoring of industry in the 1970s and 80s, effectively curtailed much of unions' ability to effect large-scale collective bargaining.

Musicians' unions also face challenges unique to the industry. While the two largest national-level unions host memberships of

5,000 (**SAG-AFTRA**) and 80,000 (**American Federation of Musicians**) both face a similar problem; they remain unrepresentative of a large group of musicians and artists by their very missions. SAG-AFTRA represents vocalists, while AFM limits itself to instrumentalists. But what grassroots or genre band is comprised of instruments, but no lead singer? Or features solely vocalists? Very few.

In fact, the challenges to unionizing within the music industry have been especially apparent within this sub industry since its beginnings. In the early days of rock'n'roll, venues that had supported an older model where musicians were employees of producers or labels refused to open their doors to rock bands, which "started to merge the role of songwriter, producer and artist...[leading to a situation] where early rock 'n' roll had to find and create new venues to perform...Those new clubs opened non-union and remained non-union," says Shaun Richman of the Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies when **interviewed for *Rolling Stone***. Rolling Stone writer Elias Leight further describes the issue:

[T]he two major unions for musicians cater primarily to major-label vocalists – effectively the top 1% of artists – and the instrumentalists who work mostly with orchestras or in opera or musical theater. A large chunk of artists falls through the gap between those two constituencies...The unions' inability to connect with the day-to-day needs of so many working musicians creates a negative feedback loop... (Leight, 2019, **"There's a Musician's Union. Many Musicians Are Unaware – or Unable to Join"**)

AFM itself is a broader umbrella organization that supports the work of local unions across the U.S. and Canada, where regional offices are free to set rates and policies, meaning that some local unions have had more success in representing live grassroots or genre musicians.

Conclusion

Prior to the pandemic, it's clear that live music was the most common revenue source for musicians, leading to immense negative impacts on musician's income. And while the overall health of the arts and culture industry has more than recovered its 2019 levels, the work of creative individuals such as musicians has not reflected the same growth. While some forms of revenue, such as online performances, streaming services, royalties, and educational opportunities have grown, that growth has not been enough to make up for the loss of revenue from musicians' most significant source, performing live.

In addition, murky federal data that relies on averages of income has skewed overall impressions of the success or struggles of the vast majority of musicians, with a tiny number of very high earners contorting the data. As a result, assumptions may have developed that the current level of pay being offered to musicians is enough, when in reality existing rates often do not reflect best practice, or the true value of musicians' labor. [In a survey from 2021, Music Export Memphis found](#) that the most frequent answer to hourly pay rate was

\$100, but that many musicians indicated that this rate remained unchanged since they began performing, as early as 1970. Adjusted for inflation, 1970's \$100 would be nearly \$800 an hour in 2023.

[In a survey from 2021, Music Export Memphis found](#) that the most frequent answer to hourly pay rate was \$100, but that many musicians indicated that this rate remained unchanged since they began performing, as early as 1970. Adjusted for inflation, 1970's \$100 would be nearly \$800 an hour in 2023.

It's clear that more research is needed into working conditions and wages for musicians in order to prevent further decline of the music industry, and to provide support for increased pay, as well as shore up professional protections for the marginalized (or simply provide them in the first place). Nevertheless, one thing is crystal clear: musicians cannot continue creating and adding their immense value to our world without more support. In the next section of our report on the music industry, we will provide a series of case studies in best practice and recommendations for how to ensure that musicians continue not just surviving but thriving in the next phase of our economy.

Appendix | Tables & Case Studies

Table 1.1 - Existing Minimum Hourly Base Rates, Ensemble Member or No Leader

U.S.			U.K.	Canada	Australia	
Atlanta Federation of Musicians	Portland (Oregon) Metro Market	Whippoorwill Arts Music aLIVE!	Musicians Union	Music Professionals of Manitoba, Inc.	Muso	
2021	2022	2023	2023	2022	2022	Average
\$91.50	\$79.81	\$200.00	\$198.25	\$77.77	\$96.63	\$123.99

Table 1.2 - Existing Minimum Hourly Base Rate, Solo Musician or Leader

U.S.				U.K.	Canada	Australia	
Atlanta Federation of Musicians (Solo Musician)	Atlanta Federation of Musicians (2-30 Musicians)	Portland (Oregon) Metro Market	Whippoorwill Arts Music aLIVE!	Musicians Union	Music Professionals of Manitoba, Inc.	Muso	
2021	2021	2022	2023	2023	2022	2022	Average
\$137.24	\$182.99	\$79.81	\$250.00	\$198.25	\$155.54	\$96.63	\$157.21
Percent increase over ensemble/non-leader rate							+27%

Table 2.1 - Per Performance Base Rate, Ensemble Member or No Leader

It must be stated that a per hour minimum is recommended to be a \$75 per hour, which must include get-ins, get-outs and travel

U.S.		U.K.			Canada	
Music Export Memphis	Denver Underground Music Showcase	Independent Society of Musicians	Encore	Last Minute Musicians	Red Deer Arts Council	
2022/2023	2022	2012	2023	2017	2022	Average
\$250.00	\$425.64	\$307.29	\$302.21	\$304.07	\$193.49	\$297.12

Table 2.2 - Per Performance Base Rate, Solo Musician or Leader

U.S.		U.K.			Canada	
Music Export Memphis	Denver Underground Music Showcase	Independent Society of Musicians	Encore	Last Minute Musicians	Red Deer Arts Council	
2022/2023	2022	2012	2023	2017	2022	Average
\$250.00	\$212.82	\$512.15	\$423.09	\$304.07	\$293.16	\$332.55
Percent increase over ensemble/non-leader rate						+12%

Table 3.1 - Special Occasion Rate Comparison

U.K.	Canada		
Musicians Union	Music Professionals of Manitoba, Inc.	Red Deer Arts Council	
2023	2022	2022	Average Increase
x200%	x200%	x236	
Percent increase over regular rate			+112%

Table 3.2 - Outdoor Rate Comparison

Canada		
Music Professionals of Manitoba, Inc.	Red Deer Arts Council	
2022	2022	Average Increase
x330%	x114%	
Percent increase over regular rate		+122%

Detailed Case Studies & Sample Models

In each case study we have outlined:

- Who Are They?
- What Happened?
- What Pay or Non Pay Consideration or Guideline Was Implemented?
- How Does it Support Artists?

The case studies are as follows:

1. [Youth on Record](#)
2. [Bohemian Foundation Music Event Fund](#)
3. [CACHE \(Central Arkansas Create Hub And Exchange\) Artist Fair Pay Policy](#)
4. [Northwest Folklife](#)
5. [Springboard for the Arts UBI Scheme](#)
6. [Memphis Guaranteed Pay Scheme](#)
7. [Sound Affects](#)
8. [Independent Musicians Alliance](#)
9. [Local 1000 Touring Musicians' Fair Pay Rates](#)
10. [Whippoorwill Arts' Music aLIVE!, Curated Concerts, Fellowships](#)
11. [Artists at Work, WPA type program for musicians](#)

Plus three international case studies:

12. [Ireland Basic Income for the Arts](#)
13. [France Intermittent du Spectacle Scheme](#)
14. [UK Musicians' Union Fair Pay Scheme](#)

We have also added two additional case studies, comparing our findings against two other sectors (as per the scope requirement). They are:

15. [Uber Technologies, United Kingdom](#)
16. [Film and Television Sector, South Africa](#)

Summary of Case Studies

	Performance setting	Form of pay	entities	Professional protections	Equity & Inclusion
1. Youth on Record	Traditional venue, ticketed	Performance fee	Nonprofit and corporate partnership	Therapy sessions, workshops, sober space	Youth from historically underserved communities
2. Bohemian foundation music event	Traditional venue	Grants up to \$2500 for nonprofits	Nonprofit	Focus on local artists	Engages diverse communities, especially youth
3. CACHE	Traditional venue, free	Performance fee	Nonprofit	Career consultations, Event insurance, Free venue rental	Platform & connect artists to opportunities
4. Northwest Folklife	Traditional venue, free	Performance Fee	Nonprofit	Food, Travel, and Lodging compensated	Lineup 50% BIPOC
5. Springboard for the Arts	N/A	Universal Basic Income	Nonprofit & gov. partnership	Unrestricted monthly stipend	75% of recipients are BIPOC
6. Music Export Memphis	Traditional & non-traditional venues	Establishing minimum pay rate doubling the market's current rate	Nonprofit & government partnership	Expanding live music opportunities	
7. Sound Affects	Non-traditional venues	Base pay for performance	Nonprofit partnering with service agencies	Paid daytime performance opportunities that do not conflict with nighttime gigs	Underserved audiences in care facilities
8. Independent Musician's Alliance	Traditional & nontraditional venues	Guaranteed Fair Wage Subsidy	Union-style organization working with agencies	Active forum for members to share working conditions and pay transparency	Higher compensation standards, benefits, improved working conditions

	Performance Setting	Form of pay	Involved groups	Professional protections	Equity & Inclusion
9. Local 1000 Touring Musicians	Traditional venues	Established Base Pay	Union	Instruments, computers, and equipment insured	Fair Trade Music; musicians have equal share and equal pay
10. Whippoorwill Arts Music aLIVE!	Non-traditional venues and virtual	Guaranteed pay for performance	Nonprofit partnering with service agencies	Guaranteed pay performances for local musicians	Focus on Equity booking
11. Artists at Work	Non-traditional	Salaried position with benefits	Nonprofit	Access to health insurance, unemployment, and COBRA	
12. Ireland Income for the Arts Scheme	N/A	Universal Basic Income	Gov.	Stipend for living expenses	
13. France Intermittence DU Spectacle	N/A	National system of compensation for temporary unemployment.	Gov.	Protects performing artists and technicians working in the gig economy	Especially supports working musicians who are parents, disabled, or ill
14. United Kingdom Fair Pay Scheme	Traditional venues	Fair Play venue scheme recognizes venues that guarantee pay & treat musicians fairly	Union	Forum for info exchange about venues and pay	
15. Uber Technologies, United Kingdom	N/A	Minimum hourly wage plus professional protections	Gov.	Holiday pay, sick leave, rest breaks	Protection from discrimination
16. Film and Television Sector, South African	N/A	National Minimum Wage	Gov	Sick & maternity leave, severance pay, occupational injury pay	

Case Study 1 - Youth on Record

Who are they?

Youth on Record is a Denver-based organization that designs and implements strengths-based, music-centered programs intended to equip young people from historically under-resourced communities with the skills needed to find success in life by advancing their academic success, increasing their economic opportunities and career skills, and strengthening their community connections and networks.

What happened?

During the nonprofit run Underground Music Showcase, Youth on Record delivered skill-sharing, networking, professional development and mentoring to each of the programmed artists, alongside their booked and paid performance. The event served over 70 local artist in the following ways:

- 75 artists participated in professional development training
- 3 free therapy sessions to all fest goers, in partnership with WellPower
- 5 days of a sober safe space for artists and their teams
- 600 artists' were offered access to online workshops
- 1 mental wellness impact headlining concert
- 20+ community partnerships established
- 6 underground community parties were staged, all paying artists

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

As per their annual report, the pay guidelines are as follows:

- \$200 per solo artist
- \$400 per band (no maximum members)
- \$100,000 paid across the festival to artists
- How Did it Support Artists?
- Thriving artist wages
- Community care

- Harm reduction
- Public health and safety
- Mental health support
- Partnership between a commercial and nonprofit entity, which is a reason to demonstrate why this can be taken as best practice

Case Study 2 - Bohemian Foundation Music Event Fund

Who Are They?

Bohemian Foundation's Music Programs builds connections by providing music-related resources for enjoyment, personal expression, and the development and improvement of music-related talent.

What Happened?

Bohemian's Music Event Fund is a competitive program for nonprofit organizations to present live music to strengthen communities. Grants of up to \$2,500 are available to support single - and multi-day events that include popular contemporary music as an integral part of the event. Grant funds are only for local artist fees and production costs and funds cannot be used to support national touring acts or bands with no members who reside in Larimer or Weld County, which is where the organization is based. Organizations hosting events in Larimer and Weld counties may apply for funds at least 60 days in advance of the event date. All funds are limited to production costs and artist fees.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- Awards - to pay artists - range from \$500 - \$2,500, depending on the event budget & structure. Typically, artists define their own fee

How Did it Support Artists?

- Showcase popular contemporary music and local artists, and ensure they are paid
- Provide fair pay for local artists and production staff

- Engage broad and diverse communities, especially youth
- Feature high quality sound
- Prioritizing local artists
- Going through the programmer, which enables them to book more local artists at their choosing

Case Study 3 - CACHE (Central Arkansas Create Hub And Exchange) - Artist Fair Pay Policy

Who Are They?

CACHE works alongside diverse creative communities across all of Northwest Arkansas, equitably enabling and advocating for their inspiring visions. Our projects and partnerships unfold across 3 mutually reinforcing phases: Research + Empower + Create.

What Happened?

The Courtyard Sessions. A free, outdoors concert series for new bands in Northwest Arkansas, to be discovered in a relaxed, outdoor environment, with a diverse mix of programming from DJs, to funk and soul, to LatinX harmonies. 9 acts and a total of 14 performers participated.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- On average, each performer/performance group was paid over \$1000
- CACHE team members have also provided career consultation, event insurance, and performance venue rentals free of charge

How Did it Support Artists?

- CACHE served every step of the way as a liaison connecting to host organizations and partners, in most cases providing professional development for artists in this regard
- Since their Courtyard Session performances, artists have been given opportunities to perform in cities across the U.S. (namely St. Louis, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Los Angeles, and New York)

- Every artist/ group has continued to work with CACHE and its respective team members to further their music careers

Case Study 4 - Northwest Folklife

Who Are They?

Northwest Folklife is an independent 501(c)(3) arts organization that celebrates the multi-generational arts, cultures, and traditions of a global Pacific Northwest. Since 1971, Northwest Folklife's work has centered on preserving cultural arts, bridging connections to heritage and identity, and cultivating the ever-evolving traditions of the Pacific Northwest. Northwest Folklife has grown alongside the greater community by collaborating with local cultural organizations and culture bearers to ensure communities have agency and voice in the representation of their communities. More than 150 Community Coordinators—including prominent artists, educators, culture bearers, and leaders throughout the region—work closely with Northwest Folklife to create programs including the Northwest Folklife Festival, Cultural Focus, Youth Engagement through Arts and Heritage (Y.E.A.H) program, and the Our Big Neighborhood youth and family program. They are for the people, by the people. Northwest Folklife believes that arts and culture strengthen our communities and should be accessible for all. Their year-round programming is produced in collaboration with Community Coordinators and powered by contributions from the community, corporations, foundations, and the public sector. NW Folklife first started in 1972 as an annual festival on Seattle Center campus, celebrating the multitude of folk cultures and communities that exist in the Pacific Northwest. Over the last 52 years, we've been able to expand our programming to include off-campus events and festivals such as Our Big Neighborhood, Seattle Children's Festival, and SuperFolk Festival.

What Happened?

For Superfolk! 2022, modified pay model to guarantee pay for all performers and reimburse travel and lodging for out-of-town performers.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- Honorariums to all performing artists
- A ticketless festival means that accessibility remains a key consideration
- In future, piloting a payment strategy in cooperation with city government, private sponsorship and individuals donations that allows an expansion of compensation, via a self-selection process - some performers do not want to get paid, and others rely on compensation
- The newly restructured Our Big Neighborhood program works directly with businesses and venues to ensure that there is compensation for all participating artists through partnerships, ticket sales, or grants

How Did it Support Artists?

- At SuperFolk! 2022: Financially, via cash compensation, \$2000 per ensemble (All-favored Nations pay)
- Through digital/virtual trade - by producing high quality video and audio for our artists, depending on their needs

Case Study 5 - Springboard For The Arts UBI Scheme

Who Are They?

Springboard for the Arts is a regional nonprofit arts organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota.

What Happened?

Alongside a wider city pay equity initiative, the organization launched a pilot program providing unrestricted monthly support to 25 artists in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods for 18 months, beginning in April 2021. The program has been extended to a phase 2, where the first 25 artists will continue to receive support, bolstered by an additional 25.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- \$500 per calendar month was offered to 25 artists for 18 months
- A further 50 artists will join the initial cohort of 25 in 2023
- The second phase is split between urban and rural artists - a first for a UBI scheme

How Did it Support Artists?

According to the social impact report, the guaranteed income's impact included:

- Financial Stability; including helping with basic needs, especially as pandemic-related aid runs out
- Long-term planning; including healthcare, savings, homeownership and equipment for art practice
- Shifting exclusionary practices in the art world to make them more accessible
- Increases in resiliency leading to artists being able to generate creative work for their community and stay in their neighborhood
- Artists (or musicians) create more knowing there is additional financial security

Case Study 6 - Music Export Memphis Guaranteed Pay Scheme

Who Are They?

Music Export Memphis creates opportunities for Memphis musicians to showcase their music inside and outside the city, driving tourism, talent attraction and economic development, and giving artists a needed engine and platform to grow their careers and elevate Memphis' profile as a contemporary music city.

What Happened?

In 2021, Music Export Memphis launched an annual compensation study to better understand the rates of pay in the city's live music ecosystem and more effectively advocate on behalf of its musicians. After finding that the average pay per gig (\$125) had not changed in more than 30 years, MEM instituted its own

minimum rate of pay (\$250). In 2022, MEM began the process of building partnerships with organizations in the city who would also adopt this minimum; in January of 2023, the Downtown Memphis Commission announced at its annual State of Downtown event that it would commit to the \$250 minimum per musician for all of its bookings - the DMC regularly activates streets and green spaces with live music throughout the year, so the impact for musicians is significant.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- \$250 per musician, per performance (no minimum time required), effectively doubling the market's current average rate of pay
- Minimum rate per musician, not precluding artists from asking for or receiving a higher rate when warranted

How Did it Support Artists?

- Immediate financial benefit for artists booked by the Downtown Memphis Commission
- The DMC's high profile announcement has sparked additional conversations with neighborhood development groups around making the same commitment
- MEM's board of directors is keen to push forward into for-profit music spaces
- MEM believes that the Downtown Memphis Commission's commitment is 'the first domino to fall', and that shifting the market a little at a time can lead to system-wide change

Case Study 7 - Sound Affects

Who Are They?

Sound Affects music programming connects professional musicians with underserved adults living in care facilities or at home. Through live performance, one-on-one residencies, and advocacy, Sound Affects meets the needs of those who are prone to isolation and who cannot access public music in the ways that they

wish. Sound Affects is an evolving platform for both underserved adults and musicians to use music to engage in their larger community and to experience mutual and lifelong esteem.

What Happened or What Is The Program?

Sound Affects was created out of a need for more support systems to connect working musicians (the larger music community and industry) with underserved and isolated individuals living in communities. In particular, Sound Affects recognizes the many barriers that older adults living in underserved care communities, facilities, and nursing homes experience in accessing quality music. Simultaneously, musicians look for stable, local, and meaningful work, but are often incentivized instead to travel and play music through modes that do not align with them personally.

What Pay Guideline/Consideration Was Implemented?

- Musicians will always be paid a base rate that compares with their other work, regardless of a partnering nursing home's ability to pay that rate
- Artists are never asked to volunteer their time for Sound Affects
- Facility sites contract with Sound Affects on a sliding scale basis and grant funds are used to supplement the cost of supporting our musicians
- Musicians are paid \$125 per musician per hour through Sound Affects in facilities where often an activity budget may be \$150 or \$200 for an entire month of activities for residents including music and any other events
- Sound Affects has worked to address this disparity and make music equitable while still supporting working musicians who are typically undervalued in their communities

How Did it Support Artists?

- Artists should be able to be paid for their craft, and be able to do meaningful work while being paid

- Sound Affects is a vehicle for musicians to feel supported in meaningful work, reversing the idea that work that feels meaningful personally pays less or nothing
- When artists are reinforced by stable pay in these spaces, it allows them to put their time and craft into these spaces fully, knowing that they can reasonably prioritize this kind of work
- This system allows for daytime work and regular (monthly and weekly) hiring giving musicians local stability that works well within their nighttime/weekend/touring lives that they might not find in the music industry otherwise

Case Study 8 - Independent Musicians Alliance

Who Are They?

The IMA is a solidarity organization formed to promote the free interchange of ideas and information among the professional jazz musicians of the Bay Area, to aid in their ability to collectively advocate for new standards of compensation, benefits, and working conditions in regional settings from clubs to concert halls, hotels to hovels, school rooms to Zoom screens, wedding halls to convention centers, and bars to assisted living centers. Independent musicians need decent pay and a safety net. To get that, they need a comprehensive understanding of the facts on the ground, and a vision of an achievable future where cooperation from private employers and local and state policy-makers can reward our culture workers with a decent and reliable standard of living. The IMA seeks to help musicians collaborate and improvise to help them gain a rational and solid economic footing in an uncertain world.

What Happened or What Is The Program?

Through solidarity of purpose, IMA has created a grassroots alliance through which advocacy

and change can and will occur. In collaboration with Jazz in the Neighborhood, the Center for New Music, Bird & Beckett, and InterMusic SF, the IMA has, through a musician-focused survey, gathered information about pay and working conditions from around the region. They use this information to educate the public and musicians about current conditions, and to formulate strategies to change existing practices for the better.

What is the Pay Guideline/ Consideration?

- Dues (\$5 or \$10/month) paying members are eligible for supplemental payments if the minimum scale of the performance meets IMA standards
- This motivates the musicians to ask for a fair guaranteed wage
- The Musicians Assistance Fund, offers reimbursement for both musician's expenses and professional development costs
 - IMA is also developing minimum scales for performance and improved working conditions
 - Funded by fundraising, dues

How Did it Support Artists?

- Jazz in the Neighborhood provides Guaranteed Fair wage subsidy, \$75-160/musician
 - Their mission is to help the venue/presenter become self-sustaining without supplements. They publicize their events and encourage venues to set up their own nonprofits and take donations for musicians' salaries, etc.
- The fund supports the efforts of members to better themselves and their colleagues, creating a more resilient and unified network of musicians
- The fund is divided into two categories: 'Gig assistance' and 'specific assistance'. Gig assistance comprises of the following: Cartage:

i.e. \$50 for electric organ, electric keyboard and amp, harp, marimba, large xylophone, vibes; \$30 for a drum set, \$20 for acoustic bass with or without amp, bass guitar and guitar with amp, bass saxophone; Parking: i.e. on all engagements where free parking is not provided or readily available, up to a maximum of \$30. Travel (mileage) allowance: in accordance with the IRS standard rate (62.5 cents per mile), available starting at a minimum of \$30. Or specific assistance consists of the following areas: space rental; instrument insurance; instrument repairs; cancellation fees; application fees for grants, educational classes, etc.

- Dues paying membership to over 130 members in the greater Bay Area
- An active forum used by members to report on venues regarding pay offered and working conditions
- Some positive discussions with the local musicians union regarding collaborations in the future

Case Study 9 - Local 1000 Touring Musicians Fair Pay Rates

Who Are They?

The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) Local 1000, is the Traveling Musicians Union, chartered to represent acoustic musicians who perform most of their gigs away from the AFM jurisdiction where they live. Its members are from all over the U.S. and Canada, and they represent their members wherever they work.

Local 1000 was founded in 1993 by a small group of folk musicians who believed in the power of collective action. They and their peers had the privilege of traveling throughout North America doing the work they loved; but the price they paid was isolation and constant risk – risk of illness, of instrument theft, of employers

backing out on contracts, and especially risk of poverty, if age or disability stopped them from working.

Now Local 1000 works together to make things better for all traveling folk, bluegrass, blues and acoustic musicians. Its musician members perform under union contracts, with union power to back them up. Instruments, computers and equipment are insured for replacement value, at affordable rates.

What Happened?

‘Fair Trade Music’ is a far-reaching organizing campaign, ensuring that musicians, as cultural workers, have the right to a fair, equitable living wage and safe working conditions, free from harassment and discrimination.

Inspired by the fair trade coffee and apparel movements, Local 1000 calls on venues to commit to paying union scale and providing a safe, dignified working environment for every performer they hire. Fair Trade Music actively works towards a cultural community where venues guarantee fair wages and safe working conditions for every musician they hire, union member or not.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- A public commitment to fair pay for artists by music venues, led by Local 1000
- \$200 per musician for small venues (~under 150) - equal share, all paid same
- \$300 per musician for larger venues (~over 150) - equal share

How Did it Support Artists?

- Ensured fair pay in equal shares for all artists
- Encouraged a public awareness campaign (e.g.. fair pay stickers displayed in venue windows), alerting audiences to the pay issues that musicians regularly face

Case Study 10 - Whippoorwill Arts Music aLIVE!, Curated Concerts, Fellowships

What Happened?

Whippoorwill Art's curated concert series emerged from the findings of landmark 2021 Roots Musician Survey "Turn Up the Mic, Tune Up the Future", where working musicians called for guaranteed pay, equity booking, and more opportunities to perform for small listening audiences.

Music aLIVE! was conceived as the world was opening up after the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping musicians get back to work with guaranteed pay, in ways that are not costly for travel and rising gas prices, i.e. local, or within driving distance or near public transportation, and with small listening audiences who want and need live music.

Community bookers (musicians mostly) line up regular concerts at community organizations where music is not always accessible. So the program has the added benefit of serving underserved communities who do not attend ticketed venues (e.g. elders, disabled people, K12 public schools in underserved areas, low-income housing, prisons, programs serving unhoused people, etc.). The concerts are acoustic solos, duos or trios and sound equipment is rarely needed.

Curated Concerts work with an external sponsor (ie AARP-OR) to produce and curate a series featuring primarily BIPOC and LGBTQIA musicians around the country for 15-20 minute faux live concerts. The Client provides access to the concerts to meet strategic needs like cultivation of donors, volunteers, investors, membership recruitment.

WA provides 4 \$25,000 grants to artists for a two year Fellowship, the grant can be used for creative project and the Fellows spend a week in Retreat together, and have access to mini-grants after their project is completed.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- Music aLIVE!
- The Community Booker is paid \$35 per booked concert

- The musicians they book earn \$200 per one-hour concert
- If Band Leader applies directly, they earn \$50 booking fee.
- Curated concert artists filming from home, earn \$1000 for 20 minute faux live online concert

How Did it Support Artists?

- Music aLIVE!:
 - Guaranteed pay of \$200 per musician 300 concerts served over 9000 people
 - Regular and predictable pay for up to 8 concerts per year
 - One hour daytime concerts during the week, so unlikely to conflict with other gigs
 - Local and within short driving distances
 - Generally, no sound amplification is needed
 - An audience enraptured by live music coming to them - these are skilled musicians and the quality makes a difference, As one community partner said: "Having quality musicians to play at the shelter has elevated the morale significantly. Now our residents look forward to those nights! There is a celebratory atmosphere that is created thanks to the power of art and the willingness of the artists to perform as if they were in a "real" music venue. (T) hanks to Whippoorwill Arts connection and joy was brought into the equation. We would love to have this gift once a week!" Andrea Rey, Homeward Bound (unhoused programs)
- Curated Concerts:
 - \$1000 ensemble or solo musician for 20 minute faux live online concert sponsored by external organizations (ie AARP-Oregon)
 - Agreement to take down the content after a 30-day period to preserve value
- Fellows receive \$25,000 grants, fully paid travel and lodging for Retreat and guaranteed pay for special performances

Case Study 11 - Artists at Work

Who are they?

Artists at Work (AAW) is a workforce resilience program in the spirit of the WPA and is designed to support the rebuilding of healthy communities through artistic civic engagement. AAW was launched in 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic, which laid bare existing problems in the artist economy. AAW wanted to get money into the hands of all kinds of artists who no longer had an ability to make money. They asked themselves, “Can we build something equitable now that all the walls have been broken down?”, and also wanted to acknowledge that artists are workers and are as crucial to communities as any other “worker.” AAW is a program of NYC-based THE OFFICE.

What happened?

AAW launched a pilot program in Western Massachusetts with seed funding from the Freshgrass Foundation. They went to local partners and said “choose an artist” (who doesn’t already have a full-time gig like a tenured teaching position). AAW chose artists from a wide variety of genres with no parameters or limitations, as well as trying to be open about “What is an artist?”

The chosen artists were put on AAW payroll for one year with a salaried position and full health benefits (which also allows them to be eligible for safety net benefits such as unemployment and COBRA at the end of the year). These artists were paid to both continue their beautiful art practice, but also embed with a local social service agency. These projects are artist- and community-driven. For example, singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Naia Kete embedded with The Alianza Project, a youth-led nonprofit organization that supports communities in healing themselves from the effects of trauma through therapeutic, artistic, spiritual,

and pro-social experiences. Every month during the pilot program, Naia interviewed a different youth educator from The Alianza Project in the process of their own healing and wrote a song inspired by their individual stories. The tangible outputs were a 6-song EP, a series of mini-documentaries to share the process of research, interviews, writing, and recording the songs each month, as well as a digital songbook filled with lyrics, images, and quotes from the youth to accompany the project.

Since the program’s founding, AAW has put 60 artists on payroll across 10 states. A full list can be found here: <https://www.artists-at-work.org/our-artists>. Ultimately, AAW would like to be in every state and sees the need to build public-private partnerships in order to expand.

What is the pay/guideline consideration?

- AAW used the MIT Living Wage Calculator to help determine salaries in each location of the project. They also thought about not just the value of the work, but also about providing UBI (Universal Basic Income - though this is not a public tenet of the program)
- They determined a median salary of \$32,500 with the understanding that this is not a full-time endeavor for the artists
- Some artists already had healthcare of their own, so requested that those funds be used to increase the base salary
- Determining salary levels is a complicated proposal – are the artists exempt or non-exempt? Do they need to “clock hours”? Also, for musicians who are on Medicaid, making more money can actually make them ineligible for that benefit and force a change in doctor
- AAW also gave \$10k to the social service agency that each artist was embedded with to ensure this program was not a financial burden on the organization

How does it support artists?

- Consistent financial support for one year
- Access to full health care benefits for one year
- Ability to file for unemployment or enroll in COBRA at the conclusion of the residency.
- Ability to continue experimenting, learning, and creating their art

Case Study 12 (International) - Ireland Basic Income For The Arts Scheme

Who Are They?

This program was initiated by the Irish Government Department of Arts, Sport, Culture and Media, using capital funds (taxpayer funds). This is the largest universal basic income scheme for artists created in over two decades.

What Happened?

The basic income for the arts program supports artists and musicians with a stipend to support living expenses. The pilot scheme closed for applications on 12 May 2022 and 2,000 participants were randomly and anonymously selected to take part. The pilot is in operation from 2022 - 2025.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- Each of the 2000 artists selected are provided €325 a week (approximately €1300 per month)

How Did it Support Artists?

- Long-term, 3 year plan allows for more data to be collected about the scheme
- Allows artists to have peace of mind knowing the costs are being covered

Case Study 13 (International) - France Intermittence Du Spectacle

Who Are They?

This is a national unemployment compensation system for performing artists and technicians in the performing arts sector - inclusive of nonprofit and third sector, administered by the French Government agency dedicated to work and unemployment allowance.

What Happened?

Intermittence du Spectacle is a system of compensation designed for people working in the performing arts and entertainment industries, who alternate between periods of employment and unemployment. This status provides a compensation, or allowance, to those who work a minimum number of hours, or engagements, per year. The system was first created in 1936 for the film industry, as a form of compensation for workers who did not qualify for annual or permanent contracts with their employers because of the short-term nature of their work. In 2020, there were 242,000 'intermittents du spectacle' on record. Employers of intermittents are required to pay into the system. To be eligible under the scheme, 507 working hours as a performing artist or technician must be achieved over 12 months. Activities other than rehearsals or performances can be taken into consideration under certain conditions, including training and career development, teaching, periods of illness, work accidents and pregnancy.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- A national system to compensate for unemployment, administered at government level

How Did it Support Artists?

- Provides financial stability during times of unemployment
- Provides greater protections around the gig-worker dilemma

Case Study 14 (International) - United Kingdom Fair Pay Scheme

Who Are They?

The Musicians' Union of the United Kingdom, who advocate and promote activism for musicians in the UK.

What Happened?

In 2012, its work led to the Fair Play venue scheme, which aims to 'recognise good practice and stamp out the unfair treatment of musicians'. Venues adhere to the scheme by supporting the fair treatment of musicians and opposing pay-to-play and unfair ticketing deals.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- The Fair Play guide contains advice for self-promoting artists in areas such as fair co-promotion deals, participating in competitions and showcase events, and applying to perform at festivals
- Musicians can submit their positive experiences at venues to get the owners involved in the Fair Play scheme
- After evaluation, the venues receive a sticker to display as the badge of their respect for artists
- The Musicians' Union website also includes a database of Fair Play Venues that endorse the principles of the Fair Play Guide, publicly accessible online
- As of July 2022, the database contains 124 venues across the UK that adhere to the scheme

How Did it Support Artists?

- Easy accessible, freely available advice and information for artists
- Creates a positive alliance between artists and venues

Case Study 15 (Other Sector, International) - Uber Technologies, United Kingdom

Who Are They?

Uber Technologies Inc. is a transportation network company that offers services including peer-to-peer ridesharing, ride-service hailing, food delivery, and bicycle sharing. Its platforms can be accessed through its websites and mobile applications. Uber operates in more than 10,000 cities globally, with an estimated 110 million worldwide users.

What Happened?

Former UK-based Uber drivers James Farrar and Yaseen Aslam took Uber to an employment tribunal in 2016, arguing they worked for Uber. Uber said its drivers were self employed and it therefore was not responsible for paying any minimum wage nor holiday pay.

In February 2021 Uber drivers must be treated as workers rather than self-employed, the UK's Supreme Court ruled. The decision meant that potentially thousands of Uber drivers are entitled to minimum wage and holiday pay.

Uber said the ruling centered on a small number of drivers and it had since made changes to its business. It is being challenged by its drivers in multiple countries over whether they should be classed as workers or self-employed.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- As a result of cases like Uber, some organizations operating in the gig economy have changed the terms they give to the people performing 'gigs' for them

How Did it Support Workers?

- Workers have the right to be paid the national minimum wage
- Workers have the right to claim statutory leave entitlement, or 'annual leave'

- If workers are too unwell to work, they can potentially receive Statutory Sick Pay. The rate changes each year and is available on the UK government website
- Workers are entitled to protection from discrimination in the workplace. Specifically for workers in the gig economy, the law protects them from being discriminated against when being allocated work
- Workers are entitled to statutory rest breaks at work (unlike self-employed gig economy workers, who are not)

Case Study 16 (Other Sector, International) - Film And Television Sector, South Africa

Who Are They?

The South African Department of Labour strives for a labor market which is conducive to investment, economic growth, employment creation and decent work. It aims to regulate the South African labor market for a sustainable economy through: appropriate legislation and regulations; inspection, compliance monitoring and enforcement; protection of human rights; provision of Employment Services; promoting equity; social and income protection; social dialogue.

What Happened?

The Department of Labour's notice, 'Intention to Deem Persons in the Film and Television Industry as Employees for Purposes of Some Parts of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Labour Relations Act'.

In January 2020, the Department of Employment and Labour issued a public call urging stakeholders in the film and television industry to make inputs on the Basic Conditions of Employment Act notice, with the intention of deeming persons in the film and television industry as employees for the purposes of the National Minimum Wage Act and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act.

What Is The Pay Guideline/Consideration?

- Publicly proposed changes to South African employment law, regarding the nature of 'gig' and freelance employment

How Did it Support Workers?

- A proposed change to law
- If passed, an eventual effect of affording actors and crew the same rights as other workers, including sick leave, maternity leave, severance pay, proof of incapacity and compensation claims for occupational accidents and illness

Once you have reviewed this material, please provide your feedback here:

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