MUSIC CENSUS LAFAYETTE

Photos Courtesy of Lafayette Consolidated Government

SUMMARY REPORT
January 2025

SOUND MUSIC CITIES

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Executive Summary

The 2024 Lafayette Music Census was a community-led initiative designed to better understand the needs of the city's music ecosystem. The Music Census ran from October 24-November 13, 2024 and collected 564 responses from individuals working in music who are 18 years or older and living in the Lafayette area, providing valuable insights into the sector's composition, economic activity, opportunities, and challenges.

Lafayette's music ecosystem is predominantly composed of Music Creatives (72%), with smaller but critical roles in Industry (18%) and Venue/Presenter (10%) sectors. While this balance reflects a strong creative base, there is a need to strengthen industry support and live music presenters to create a more sustainable ecosystem. Most respondents (82%) have over 10 years of experience, but 63% are 40 years or older, raising concerns about the underrepresentation of younger musicians (7% are 18–24 years old).

The economic activity of Lafayette's music sector, as reported by respondents, generates $13.2 million annually in income across respondents, with 32% of their annual income coming from music. The average annual income from music per respondent is $23,500, while average household income for respondents is $75,000. Collectively, respondents spend approximately $3 million annually on music expenses to sustain their music careers, with 50% of that spending staying within the local economy. Local live performances remain the primary income source, though pay rates have stagnated. Many musicians (63%) work outside of music, with 85% of them relying on their outside job as their primary source of income.

Lafayette's genre landscape is diverse, with respondents identifying most commonly with Rock (42%), Cajun (33%), Folk/Americana (29%), and Zydeco (26%). While Cajun and Zydeco remain cultural cornerstones, other genres—such as Jazz (13%), Classical (8%), and R&B/Hip-Hop (7%)—have less visibility and support. Expanding programming and funding for these underrepresented genres could foster a more inclusive music ecosystem.

Venues and Presenters play a crucial role in Lafayette's music community, hosting an average of 55 live events per year for a total of 1,979 live music events annually. However, many face challenges such as high permitting costs, regulatory inefficiencies, and audience development difficulties. 79% of Venue respondents identified audience development as their greatest need, while 67% requested a best practices guide for hosting live music. While 86% of Venue/Presenters favor tax discounts and incentives to host live music, 69% of Venues and Presenters want a city government advocate for live music. Across all respondents, 52% seek a community-led collaborative to advocate for the needs of Lafayette's music scene. Combining these approaches of an internal city advocate and a community-led collaborative could enhance advocacy efforts and streamline regulatory support.

Beyond local opportunities, many Lafayette music professionals rely on regional music opportunities, with 66% traveling to New Orleans and 55% to Baton Rouge for music-related work. Strengthening partnerships within the region and expanding local opportunities could reduce this dependence and establish Lafayette as a more self-sufficient music hub.

Lafayette's music ecosystem is known for its strong cultural identity and deep-rooted traditions, yet 55% of respondents perceive it as elitist, and 48% describe it as competitive. Addressing these gaps through community-driven initiatives and professional development programs will be key to fostering a more accessible and sustainable music scene.

This report and the online dashboard available at **LafayetteMusicCensus.com** offer more in-depth data, insights, and opportunities to understand, support, and grow the heritage and authenticity of the Lafayette music ecosystem and all the benefits it offers culturally and economically.

Introduction

Lafayette takes its music and culture seriously and aims to keep the rich heritage of music, especially the people, businesses, and actions at the core of it, thriving. The Lafayette Music Census was a community-led initiative to gain a better understanding of the current strengths, opportunities and needs of the Lafayette music community. A keystone of this initiative was conducting a Music Census to capture key information about the Lafayette music ecosystem to help city leaders and the community make better informed, data-driven decisions to support and grow the music ecosystem.

The Lafayette Music Census ran from October 24-November 13, 2024 and collected 564 responses. The study was open to all people working in music in any capacity who are 18 years or older and living in the Lafayette, LA, area. The census was administered by Sound Music Cities, a leading Austin-based provider of music ecosystem studies and music census work, in conjunction with the the Lafayette Consolidated Government, Lafayette Economic Development Authority, and Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission. Lafayette is joining the 2025 multi-city cohort program administered by Sound Music Cities which meets monthly to discuss best practices on improving music ecosystems, allowing Lafayette to gain insight from other cities conducting similar research.

This summary report has been prepared by Sound Music Cities and includes an overview of the Music Ecosystem Health Assessment based on 10 key indicator areas. The report includes key findings and recommendations. Alongside this report, Sound Music Cities has provided access to an online dashboard where you can find more data at **LafayetteMusicCensus.com**.

564 responses
October 24- November 13, 2024

10% venue/presenter
18% industry
72% music creatives

Photos Courtesy of Lafayette Consolidated Government

INTRODUCTION TO A MUSIC CENSUS

Any strategy to support and grow a music ecosystem begins with a basic understanding of its population. Professional music communities are not easily discoverable using traditional methods (such as through labor statistics or economic data). A music census collects key data points to better understand music people and their economic activity within a specific geography. It provides a baseline for policymakers and the larger community to understand and take action.

The value of a music census goes well beyond the data itself. Such initiatives ignite a range of activities that are conducive to more strategic and sustainable support for local music scenes over the long term, beginning with validating this economically marginalized group, sharing new learning, activating civic and community resources, and ultimately empowering music people to take ownership of change initiatives.

A Community Effort

The 2024 study was led by a group of Lead Partners. This study took a grassroots approach that engaged local partners who hold the relationships with music people. Community Partners served as the primary means of outreach to music people and these organizations were instrumental in shaping the Music Census effort and engagement.

Thank you to our amazing Lead Partners and Community Partners.

LEAD PARTNERS

Lafayette Consolidated Government
Lafayette Economic Development Authority
Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

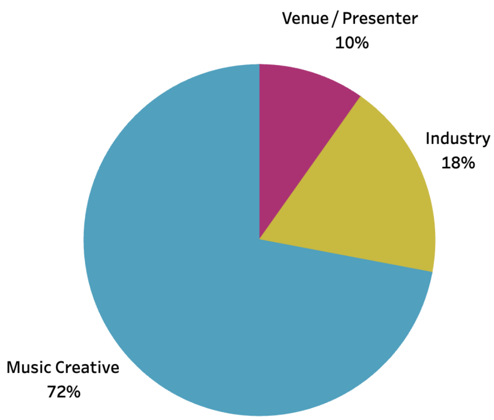
Acadiana Center for the Arts
Acadiana Cultural Health Access Initiative
Acadiana Symphony Orchestra & Conservatory of Music
Autumn Lee Productions
Blue Moon Saloon & Guesthouse
Celtic Bayou Festival
Chad Huval
Chas Justus
CODOFIL
Dennis Skerrett
Double dog
Downtown Lafayette Unlimited
Dr. Daylight's Jazz Company
Faustina
Festival International de Louisiane
Festivals Acadiens et Créoles
Heymann Performing Arts Center
Kate Durio
KRVS Public Media at UL Lafayette
LA Folk Roots, Inc.
Louisiana Creole Culture
Louisiana Folk Roots, Inc.
Matthew Gary
ML1 Records
Nighting Gale of Song
One Acadiana
Opportunity Machine
PASA
School of Rock Lafayette
Sleeping Village
Social Entertainment
Sola Violins
Step N Strut Trail, Festival International De Louisiana
Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience
University of Louisiana
Vermilionville

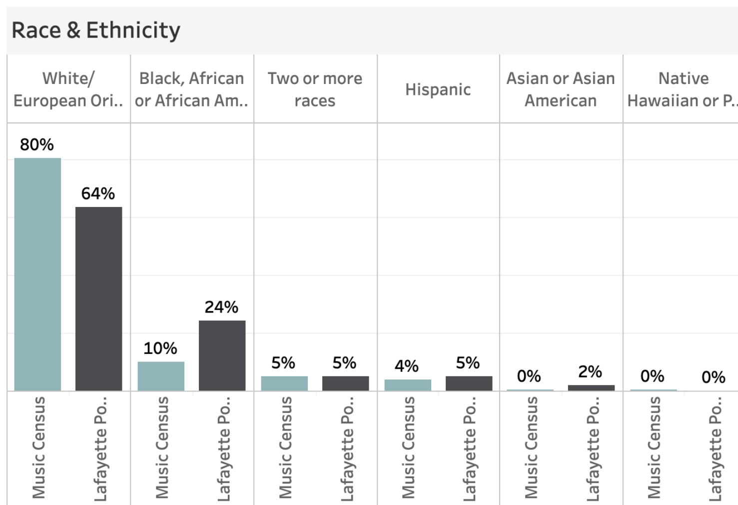
Photos Courtesy of Lafayette Consolidated Government

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Ecosystem Composition

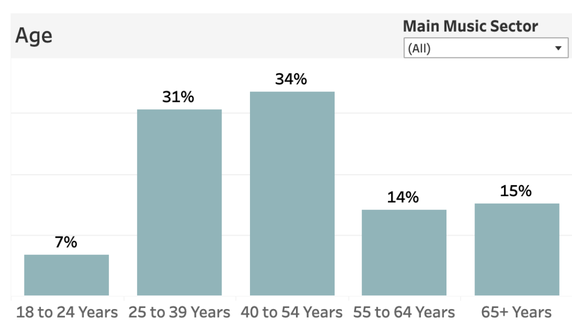
The Lafayette music ecosystem respondents are predominantly Music Creatives (72%), with smaller representation in Industry (18%) and Venue/Presenter roles (10%). Most respondents are highly experienced (82% with over 10 years) and 34% are mid-career (40–54 years), noting that at 7%, younger individuals (18–24 years) are underrepresented. The ecosystem is male-dominated (71%) and primarily White/European Origin (80%). Respondents most frequently associate with genres like Rock (42%), Cajun (33%), Folk/Americana (29%), and Zydeco (26%).



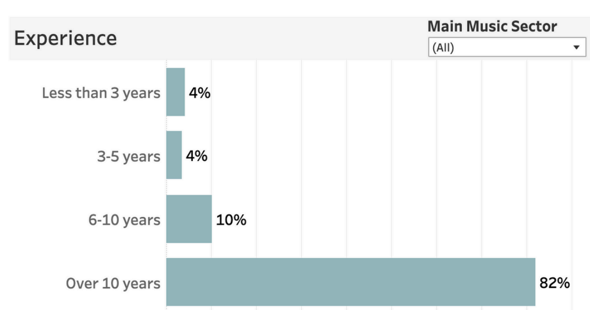


- **Race & Ethnicity** - Respondent data reveals that 80% of Lafayette Music Census participants identify as White/European Origin, 10% as Black/African American, 5% as Two or More Races, and 4% as Hispanic. Compared to Lafayette's general population, which is 64% White and 24% Black/African American, the census reflects an overrepresentation of White/European Origin individuals and an underrepresentation of Black/African Americans. These differences may point to varying levels of engagement within the music ecosystem or response rates to the census.

- **Age** - Respondent data reveals a diverse age range with 34% of respondents aged 40 to 54 years, followed by 31% aged 25 to 39 years. Individuals aged 55 to 64 years account for 14%, while those 65 and older make up 15%. The youngest cohort, aged 18 to 24 years, represents only 7% of respondents. Efforts to attract and engage younger demographics could help ensure the sustainability and growth of the music ecosystem.

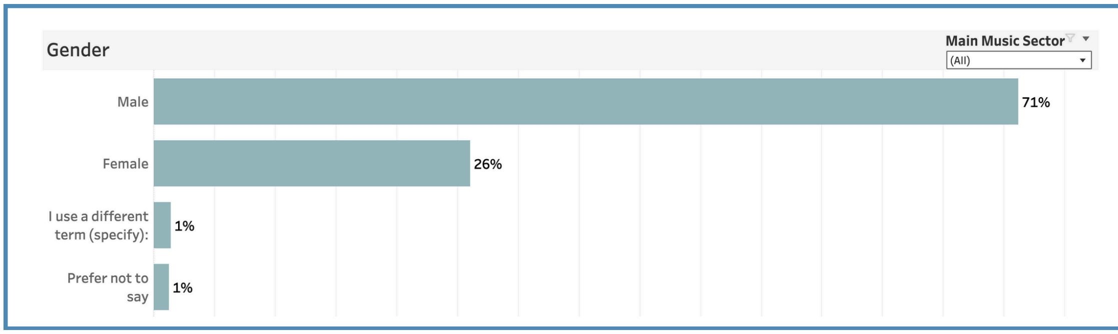


- **Experience** – Overall, a significant majority (82%) have over 10 years of experience, highlighting a seasoned and well-established professional community. An additional 10% report 6-10 years of experience, while smaller groups have 3-5 years (4%) or less than 3 years (4%). This distribution reflects relatively few newer entrants. Efforts to engage and support those with less experience could foster growth and bring fresh perspectives to the community.



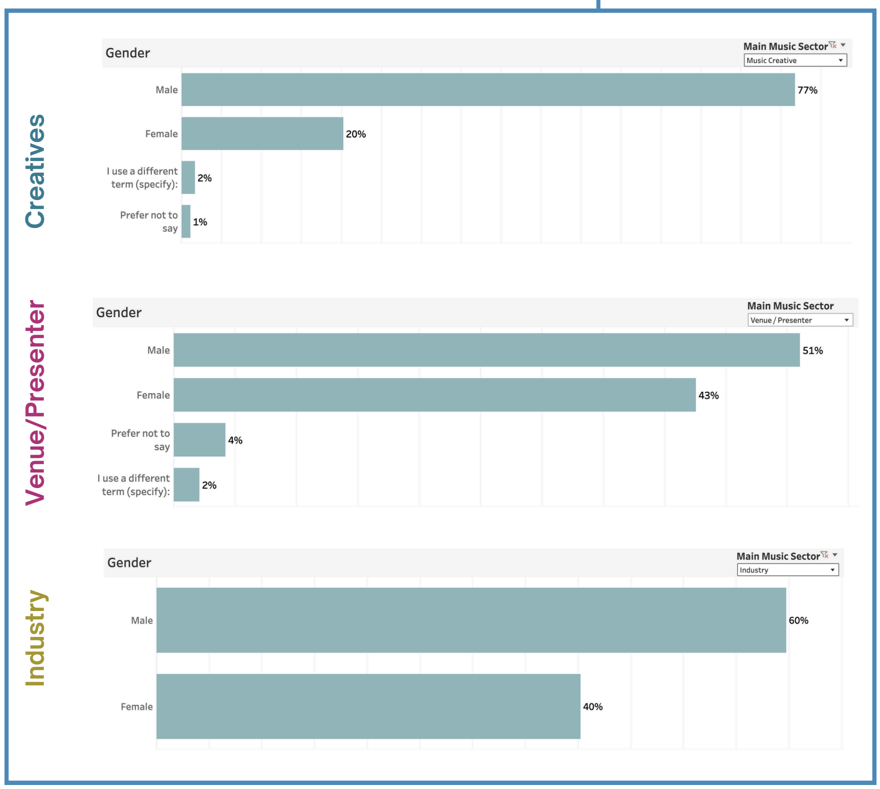
Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

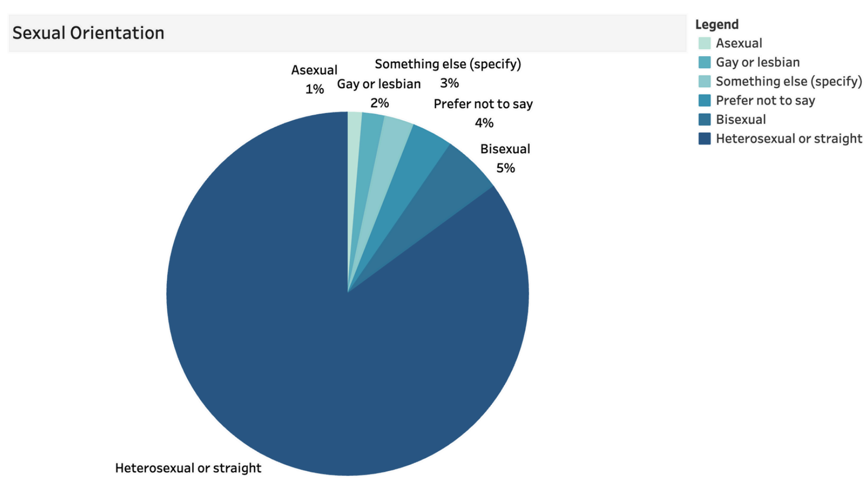
Ecosystem Composition (continued 2/4)



- **Gender** - The gender distribution highlights that 71% of respondents identify as male, while 26% identify as female. Additionally, 1% use a different term to describe their gender, and 1% prefer not to disclose their gender identity. While the music ecosystem overall reflects a male-dominated space, the gender gap improves in the Industry and Venue/Presenter sectors, where female representation is higher.

- **Sexual Orientation** - The Lafayette music ecosystem displays a predominantly heterosexual respondent base, with 85% identifying as heterosexual or straight. Bisexual individuals account for 5%, followed by 2% identifying as gay or lesbian, 1% as asexual, and 3% using another term to describe their orientation. Additionally, 4% prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation. While the majority identify as heterosexual, the presence of LGBTQ+ individuals adds to the diversity of the ecosystem.





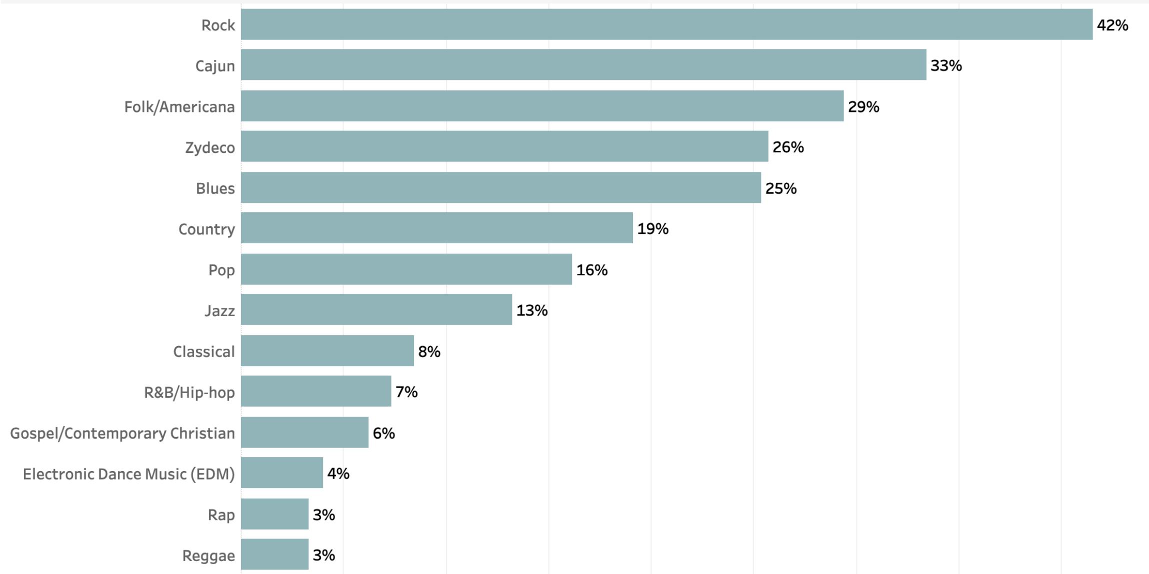
> The music scene has a great sense of community. The talent pool is very high.

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Ecosystem Composition (continued 3/4)

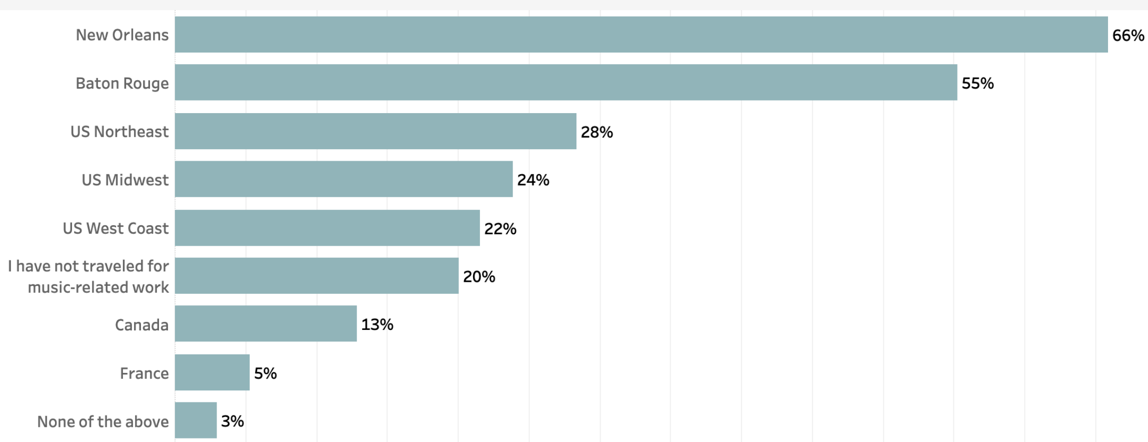
- **Ecosystem Genre Representation -** Respondents in the Lafayette music ecosystem most commonly associate with or perform in Rock (42%), followed by Cajun (33%), Folk/Americana (29%), Zydeco (26%), and Blues (25%). Other genres, such as Country (19%), Pop (16%), and Jazz (13%), also have notable representation. Classical (8%), R&B/Hip-hop (7%), Gospel/Contemporary Christian (6%), and EDM (4%) show smaller engagement, with Rap and Reggae (3% each) being the least associated genres. This diverse mix highlights the strong influence of local heritage genres like Cajun and Zydeco, while also reflecting broader participation across popular and niche styles.

Which music genres do you most associate with or perform in?(Select up to three)



- **Regional Music Work Destinations** - Among Lafayette respondents, the most frequently traveled destination for music-related work in the past year was New Orleans (66%), followed by Baton Rouge (55%). The US Northeast visited by 28% of respondents, while 24% traveled to the US Midwest, and 22% to the US West Coast. Notably, 20% of respondents indicated they did not travel to any of the listed cities for music work, while 13% travel to Canada and 5% travel to France.

Which cities have you traveled to for music-related work in the last year? (Check all that apply)



> Lafayette is very diverse as far as the variety of sounds and genres that exist here.

> One of my favorite things about the Lafayette music scene is its deep cultural roots in Cajun and Creole music, which make it truly unique and unlike any other.

> Lafayette is very diverse as far as the variety of sounds and genres that exist here.

SOUND MUSIC CITIES

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

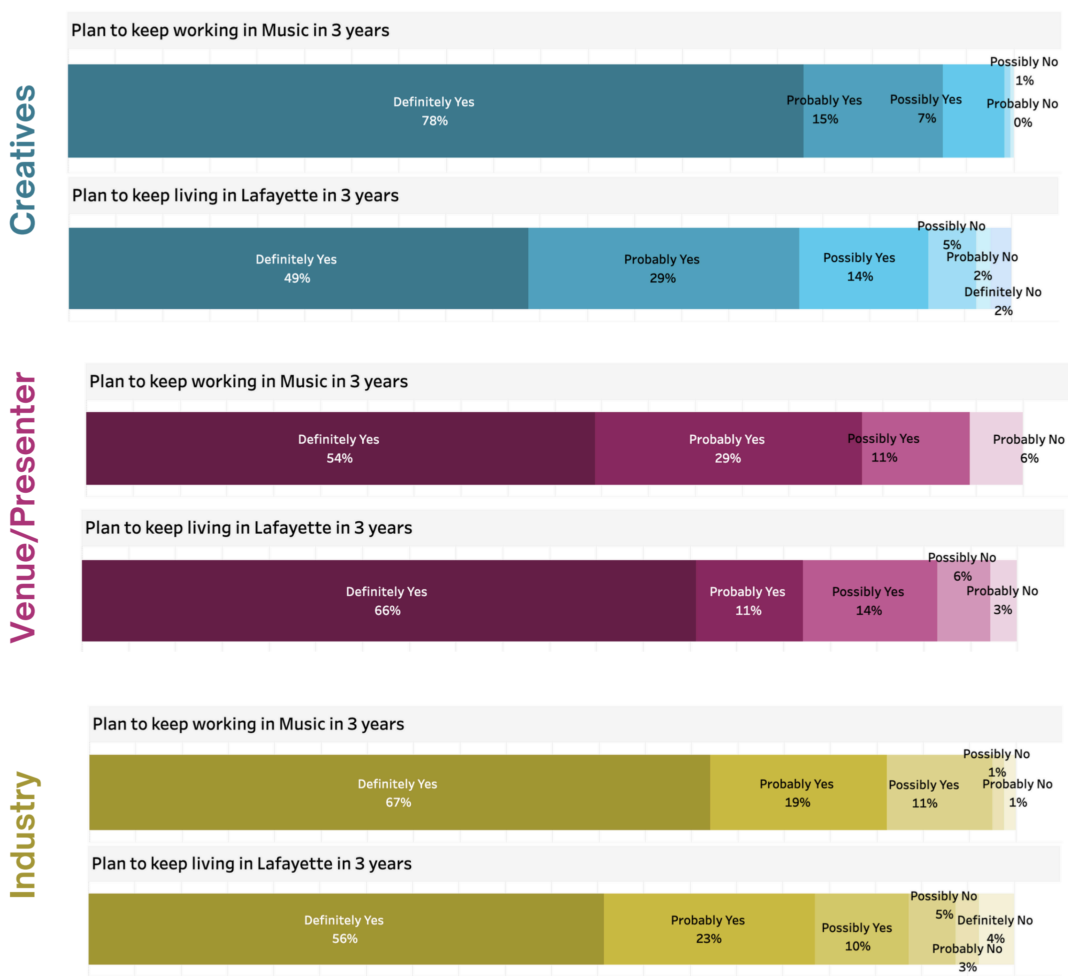
Ecosystem Composition (continued 4/4)

Plans to Stay in Music and in Lafayette:

- **Creatives** - The majority of Creative respondents in the Lafayette music ecosystem (93%) are confident about continuing to work in music over the next three years, with a strong 78% responding "Definitely and Probably Yes." However, there is less certainty about staying in Lafayette, as only 49% responded "Definitely Yes," and 29% "Probably Yes," indicating potential concerns about retaining local creative talent.

- **Venue/Presenter** - The majority of Venue/Presenter respondents in the Lafayette music ecosystem (83%) are confident about continuing to work in music over the next three years, with 54% responding "Definitely Yes" and 29% "Probably Yes." Confidence about staying in Lafayette is slightly higher, with 66% responding "Definitely Yes" and 11% "Probably Yes," reflecting a strong commitment to both their profession and the local community.

- **Industry** - The majority of Industry respondents in the Lafayette music ecosystem (86%) are confident about continuing to work in music over the next three years, with 67% responding "Definitely Yes" and 19% "Probably Yes." Confidence about staying in Lafayette is slightly lower, with 56% responding "Definitely Yes" and 23% "Probably Yes," reflecting a strong commitment to their profession but potential concerns about long-term residency in Lafayette.



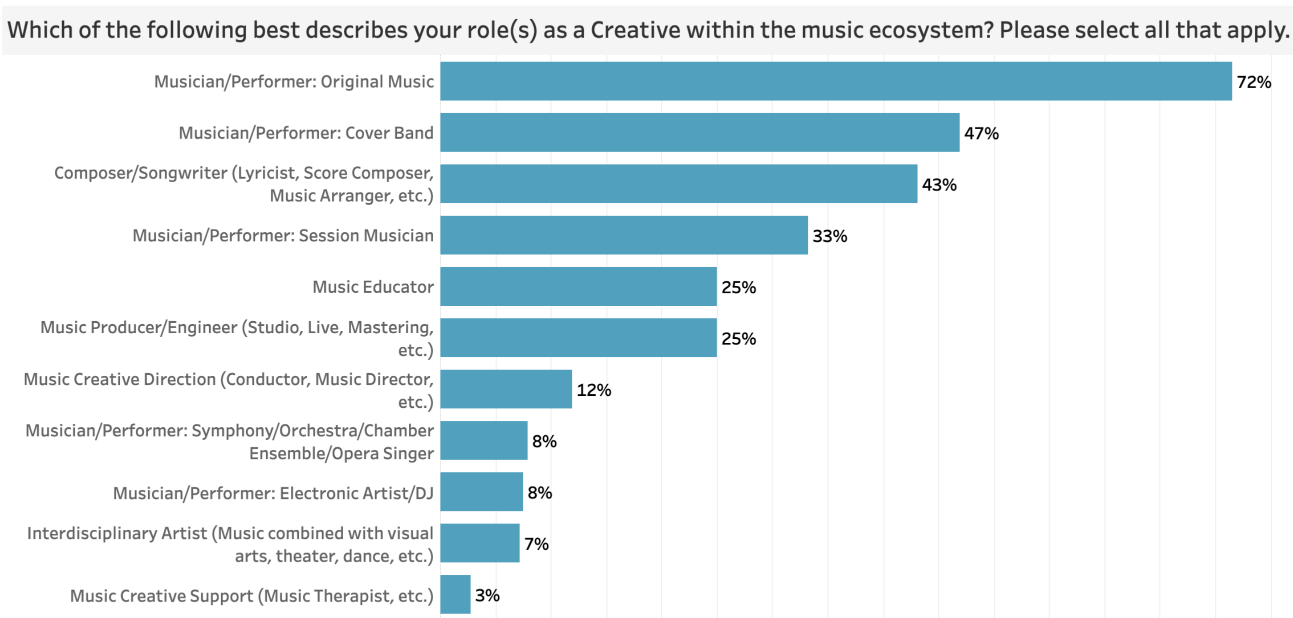
> "We should be one of the largest music hubs, but we lack the necessary resources and vision."

> "Lafayette has SO many incredible musicians. More than most cities per capita."

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

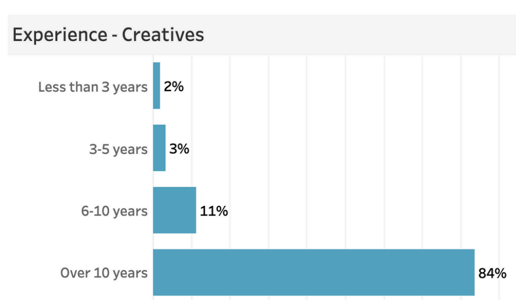
Creative Profile

Most Creatives (84%) in Lafayette have over 10 years of experience, underscoring a seasoned professional community. Creative respondents in Lafayette take on a wide range of roles with the most common roles being musician/performer of original music (72%) and musician/performer in cover bands (47%). Career concerns include the increasing cost of living (45%) and stagnant pay rates (42%). Local live performances are the primary income source, relied on significantly by 52% of respondents. Creative respondents in Lafayette spend an average of $7,541 annually on music-related expenses for a collective annual spend of $3 million, with 50% of that spending staying local. This local retention highlights the critical economic role of Lafayette Creatives in supporting local Industries. While most (46%) Creatives record in English, 31% of respondents record in French. Lafayette Creatives report a mix of playing for audiences who attend primarily to dance and also for those who do not come to dance.



- **Creative Types/Roles** - Among creatives in Lafayette, the most common role is Musician/Performer: Original Music, with 72% of respondents identifying in this category. This is followed by Musician/Performer: Cover Band at 47% and Composer/Songwriter at 43%. Session musicians make up 33%, while 25% each identify as Music Educators or Music Producers/Engineers. Other roles, such as Creative Direction (12%), Symphony/Orchestra/Chamber Ensemble performers (8%), and Electronic Artists/DJs (8%), are less common. Interdisciplinary artists (7%) and those in creative support roles (3%) represent the smallest groups, highlighting a focus on performance and composition within the creative community.

- **Experience** - The majority of creative respondents in Lafayette (84%) have over 10 years of experience, indicating a highly seasoned community. An additional 11% report 6–10 years of experience, while only 5% have less than 6 years. This highlights a predominantly established creative workforce, with limited representation from newer entrants to the field.

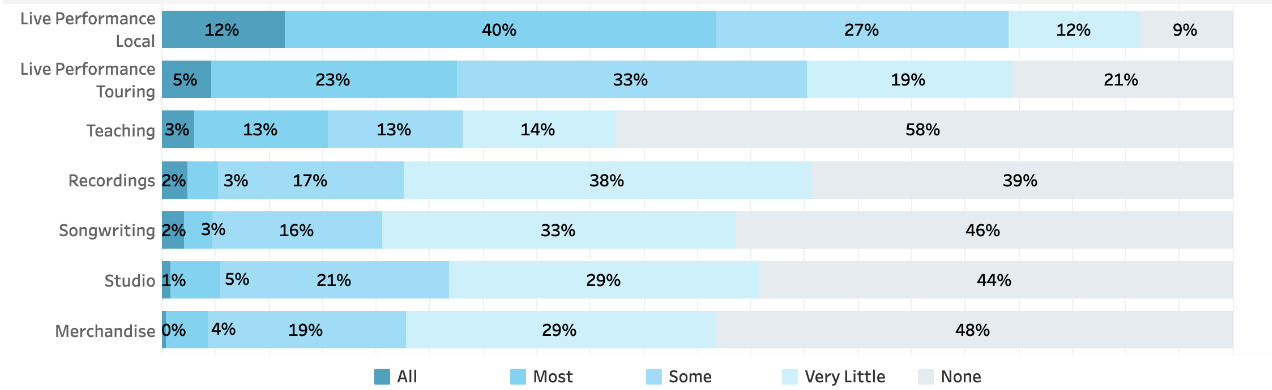


Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Creative Profile (continued 2/3)

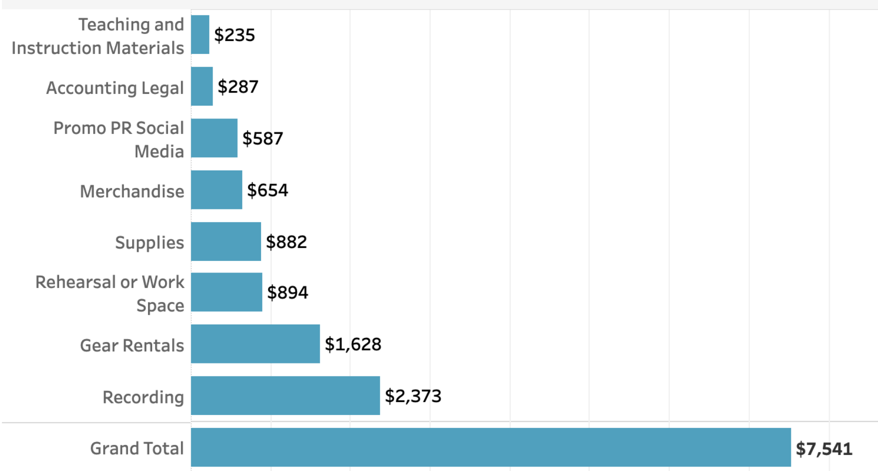
- **Sources of Income** - Local live performances are the most significant income source for creatives in Lafayette, with 12% earning all their income from this source and 40% earning most. Touring is the second largest contributor, with 5% earning all their income and 23% earning most. Teaching also plays a notable role, with 58% reporting it provides some income. Other revenue streams, such as recordings (39% some), songwriting (33% some), studio work (29% some), and merchandise sales (19% some), contribute minimally. This highlights a reliance on live performances and touring as primary income sources, with teaching and other activities supplementing earnings.

Creative: Sources of Income



- **Spend** - Creative respondents in Lafayette report an average annual spending of $7,541 to support their work. The largest expenses are for recording ($2,373) and gear rentals ($1,628), followed by rehearsal or workspace ($894) and supplies ($882). Merchandise ($654) and promotional efforts like PR and social media ($587) also represent notable costs. Smaller expenses include accounting and legal services ($287) and teaching materials ($235). This spending highlights the significant financial investment required to maintain a creative career in Lafayette.

Creative Expenses Annually - Average



$7,541
Average Creative Spend

$3M
Total Creative Respondents Spend Annually

50%
Spent Locally

> "Most musicians' expenses outweigh their income from performing in local venues."

> "Local traditional musicians make more money exporting Louisiana traditional music than they typically make locally."

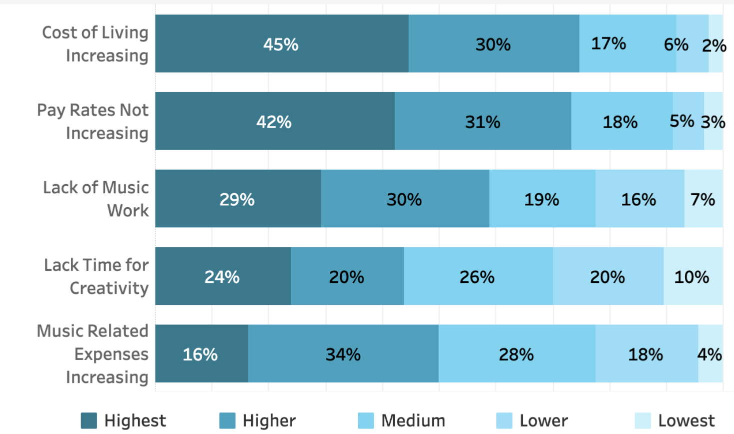
> "There's a high level of talent and creativity across genres, which should be celebrated more."

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Creative Profile (continued 3/3)

- **Career Concerns** - The top career concern for creative respondents in Lafayette is the increasing cost of living, with 45% rating it as their highest concern and an additional 30% rating it higher. Pay rates not increasing is the second-highest concern, with 42% rating it highest and 31% higher. Lack of music work follows, with 29% considering it the highest concern. Other concerns include lack of time for creativity (24% highest) and increasing music-related expenses (16% highest). These findings reflect significant financial pressures impacting the ability of creatives to sustain their careers, alongside challenges related to opportunities and time for artistic pursuits.

Creative Career Concerns



> "The multi-generational sharing of music experience lends authenticity and depth to the local scene."

> "Creatives from underrepresented genres often feel isolated or excluded from the mainstream scene."

> "Many creatives have decades of experience but struggle to find recognition or financial success locally."

> "Cajun and Creole music provide a cultural richness that isn't found elsewhere."

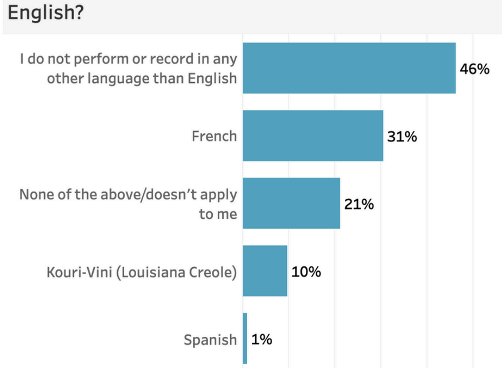
> "French music is a defining feature of Lafayette, but there's room for growth in integrating it with modern genres."

> "Audiences still value live performances where they can dance, which sets Lafayette apart."

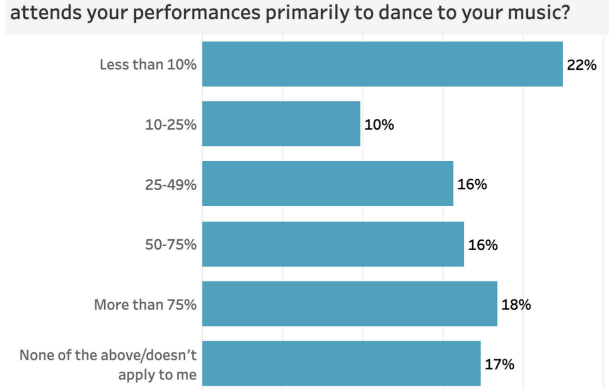
- **Language Diversity in Music Creation** - Among creative respondents, 46% do not perform or record music in any language other than English, while 31% create music in French. An additional 10% perform in Kouri-Vini (Louisiana Creole), reflecting the local cultural influence. Spanish is represented minimally, with only 1% of respondents creating music in this language. Furthermore, 21% of respondents indicate that this question does not apply to their work, suggesting a segment of creatives focused on non-linguistic or instrumental compositions.

- **Dancing and Music in Lafayette** - Audience engagement through dancing plays a notable role in Lafayette's music ecosystem. Among respondents, 18% report that more than 75% of their audience attends primarily to dance, while 16% each indicate 50–75% and 25–49%. A smaller 10% report 10–25%, while 22% see less than 10% of their audience attending for dancing. Meanwhile, 17% of respondents indicate this question doesn't apply to them. This underscores the importance of dance-friendly music in Lafayette, reflecting its cultural traditions and audience preferences.

For those of you who record, compose, or perform music, do you create music in languages other than English?



For those who perform, what percentage of your audience attends your performances primarily to dance to your music?



Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Venue/Presenter Profile

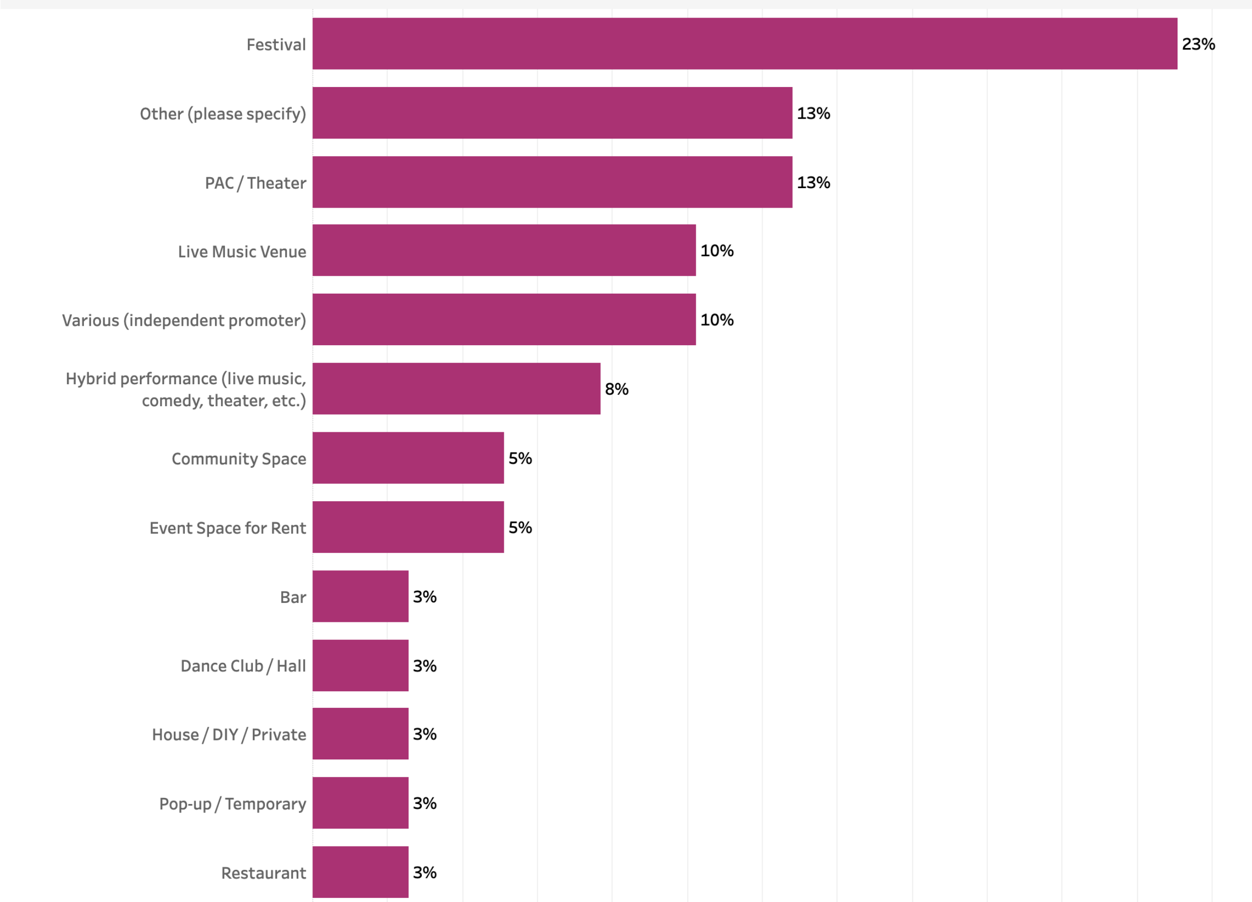
Lafayette Venue/Presenter respondents display diverse ownership structures, with 43% being locally owned for-profit entities and 34% nonprofit organizations. Women are well-represented at 43%, narrowing the gender gap compared to other sectors. Venue sizes vary, with the largest segment (29%) accommodating 101-200 attendees, followed by smaller venues (23%) for 1-100 attendees, and mid-sized options at 501-1000 attendees (16%). Outdoor capabilities are notable, with 82% of venues supporting open-air events. On average, venue/presenter respondents host 55 live events annually, contributing to Lafayette's dynamic music scene. Dance-focused events drive revenue through larger audiences (39%) and alternative income streams (27%), showcasing creative strategies to sustain Lafayette's vibrant music ecosystem.

- **Venue/Presenter Type** - Festivals are the most common type of Venue, representing 23% of the total. PAC/Theaters along with "Other" Venue/Presenter types like music camps, student performance presenters, and agencies involved in presenting music each represent 13% of Venue/Presenter Types. Live Music Venues make up 10% as do Various independent promoters. Hybrid performance spaces represent 8% while Community Spaces and Event Spaces for Rent each represent 5%. Bars, Dance Clubs, House/DIY, Pop-up/Temporary, and Restaurants each represent 3%.

Venues average
55
live events/year

1,979
total live events/year

Venue/Presenter Type

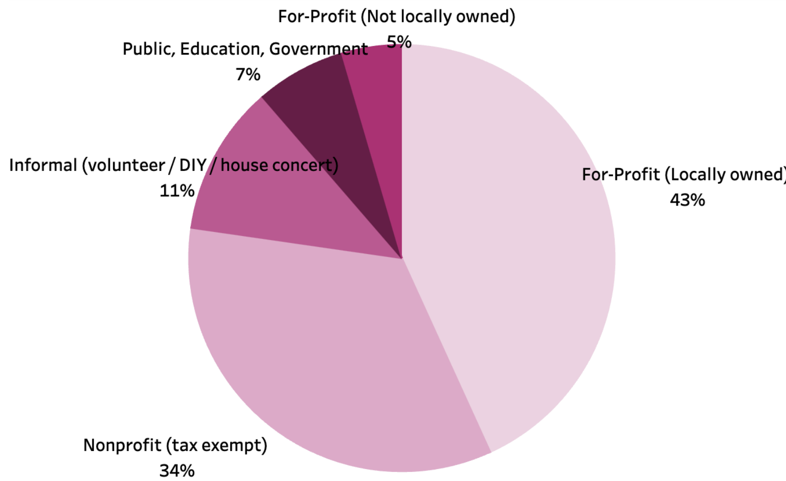


Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Venue/Presenter Profile (continued 2/3)

- **Venue Ownership/Tax Structure** - The ownership structure of respondents is primarily for-profit and locally owned (43%), reflecting a strong presence of local entrepreneurship in Lafayette's music ecosystem. Nonprofit (tax-exempt) organizations make up 34%, emphasizing the significant role of mission-driven initiatives. Informal settings, such as volunteer-run or DIY house concerts, account for 11%, showcasing a grassroots approach to supporting music. Public, education, or government-affiliated venues represent 7%, while only 5% of respondents operate as for-profit but not locally owned.

Venue/Presenter Ownership (Tax) Structure



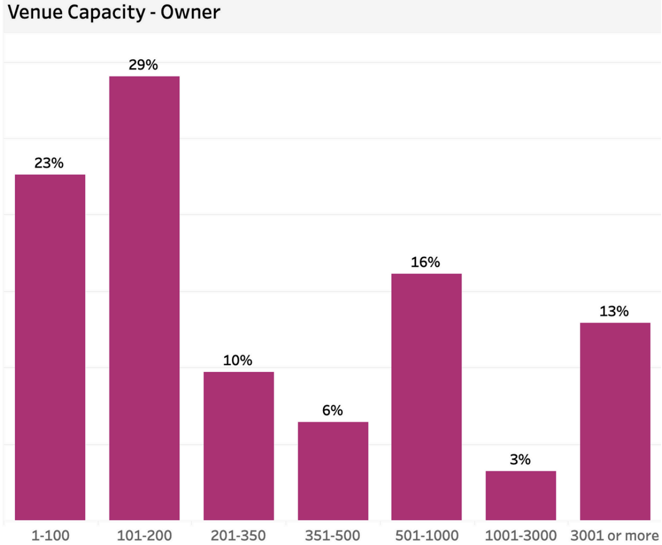
> All-ages venues are sorely lacking, limiting opportunities for younger audiences and performers.

> Venues could benefit from city support to manage noise ordinances and other regulatory challenges.

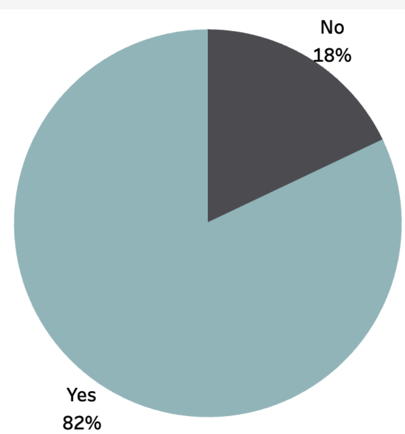
> Venues need better sound systems and professional sound engineers to enhance performances.

- **Venue Capacity & Outdoor Capabilities** - The majority of venues in Lafayette have capacities of 101-200 attendees (29%), followed by smaller venues with 1-100 capacity (23%) and mid-sized venues accommodating 501-1000 attendees (16%). Larger venues with capacities of 3001 or more make up 13%, while smaller segments include capacities of 201-350 (10%), 351-500 (6%), and 1001-3000 (3%). Additionally, 82% of venues have outdoor capabilities, reflecting a strong adaptability to open-air events, which is likely a valuable asset in supporting a wide range of performances and audience experiences.

Venue Capacity - Owner



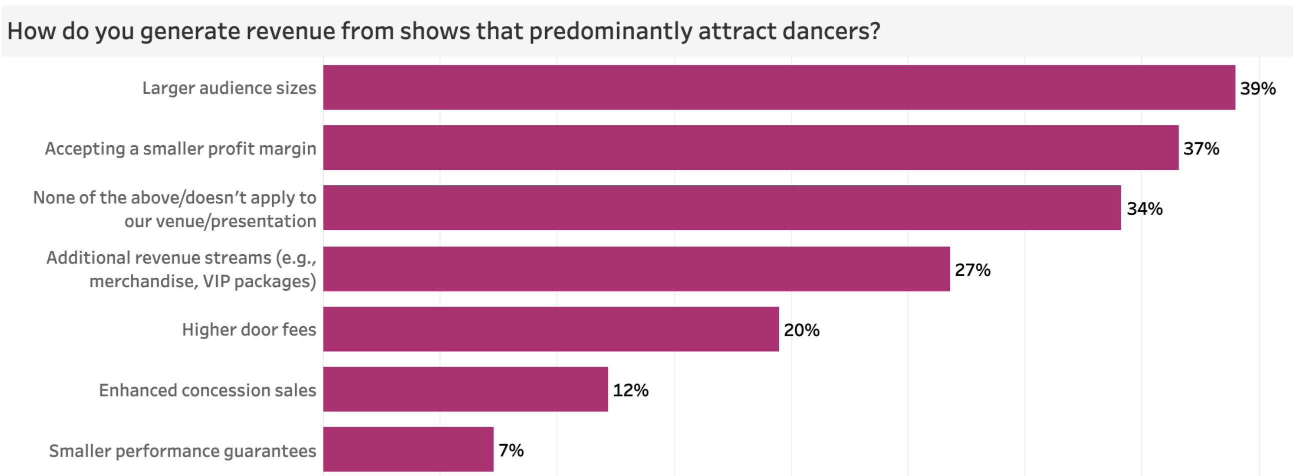
Outdoor Capabilities



Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Venue/Presenter Profile (continued 3/3)

- **Economic Strategies for Dance-Focused Events** - Venues hosting events that primarily attract dancers adopt various strategies to generate revenue. The most cited approach is leveraging larger audience sizes (39%), followed closely by accepting smaller profit margins (37%). Additional revenue streams like merchandise sales or VIP packages are utilized by 27%, while higher door fees (20%) also contribute. A smaller percentage rely on enhanced concession sales (12%) or smaller performance guarantees (7%), showcasing a range of financial strategies tailored to dance-centric events. Interestingly, 34% of respondents indicated that dance-focused shows do not apply to their operations.



> "A lot of venues support music by having bands play, and the public concerts are nice."

> "It's easy for a new act or group to start playing music around town because many venues are willing to let them perform."

> "The sheer number of venues and terrific musicians is amazing for such a small community."

> "Some venues genuinely support the local scene and create a welcoming atmosphere for musicians."

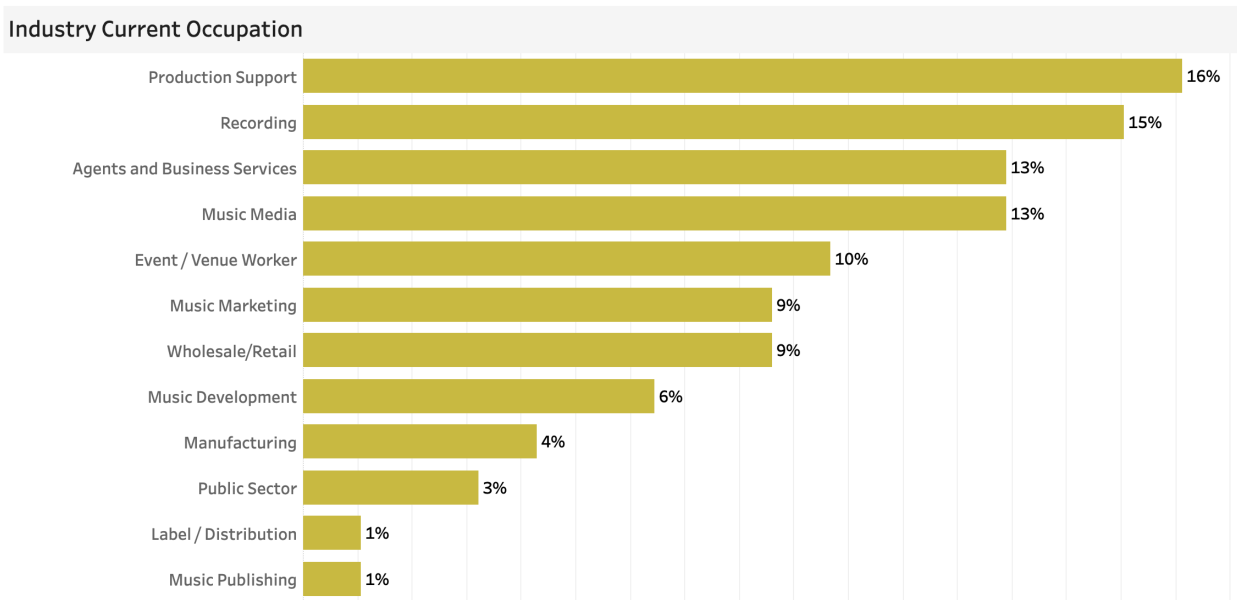
> "Too many venues book the same bands repeatedly, limiting opportunities for diversity."

> "Venues tend to prioritize out-of-town acts over talented local bands."

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

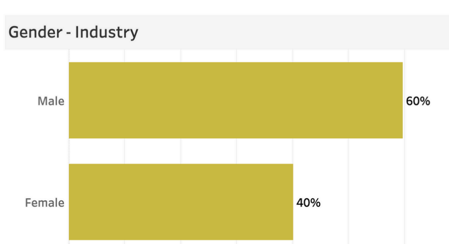
Industry Profile

The most common occupations of the Lafayette Music Industry respondents include production support (16%), recording (15%), agents and business services (13%), and music media (13%). Creative respondents access Industry services through a combination of local resources, non-local providers, self-management, and opting out. Locally sourced services are most prevalent for Equipment (45%) and Studio needs (44%); however, a significant number of Creatives manage services themselves, particularly for Booking (73%), Label needs (39%), and Publicity/Social (78%). The Industry client base is predominantly local, with some national and limited international engagement. The Industry sector is more balanced in gender representation, especially compared to the Creatives.



- **Industry Occupation** - The current occupations of respondents in the music industry highlight diverse roles within Lafayette's music ecosystem. Production Support leads at 16%, followed closely by Recording at 15%. Agents and Business Services, as well as Music Media, each account for 13%, reflecting robust support for artist representation and media engagement. Event and Venue Workers make up 10%, while Music Marketing and Wholesale/Retail each represent 9%, showcasing the ecosystem's focus on promotion and commerce. Smaller segments include Music Development (6%), Manufacturing (4%), and Public Sector roles (3%). Label/Distribution and Music Publishing are niche sectors, each comprising just 1%, indicating potential areas for growth within Lafayette's music industry.

- **Gender** - The Industry sector is more balanced in gender representation than other parts of the ecosystem, with 60% identifying as male and 40% identifying as female.



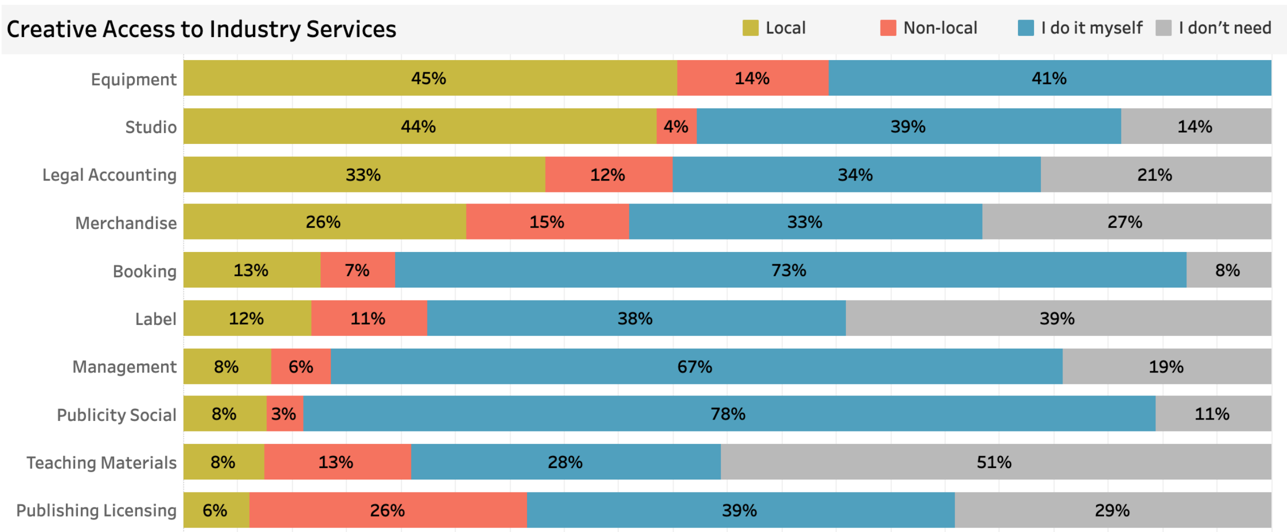
> There's a strong sense of community within the industry—people help and support each other.

> The local music industry feels stagnant, with no unified vision or plan for growth..

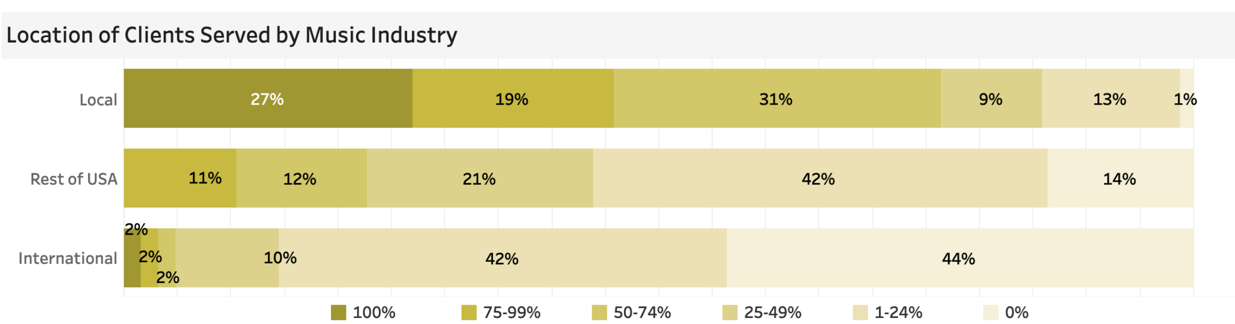
Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Industry Profile (continued)

- **Creative Access to Industry** - Creative respondents access industry services through a combination of local resources, non-local providers, self-management, and opting out. Locally sourced services are most prevalent for Equipment (45%) and Studio needs (44%), while non-local providers are notable for Publishing/Licensing (26%) and Teaching Materials (13%). A significant number of respondents manage services themselves, particularly for Booking (73%), Label needs (39%), and Publicity/Social (78%). Some services, like Management (67%) and Publicity/Social, reflect high levels of self-reliance. Conversely, services like Legal/Accounting (34% non-local) and Label (38% self-managed) reveal gaps in local availability or access, emphasizing opportunities to strengthen local support systems in Lafayette's music industry.



- **Location of Clients** - Lafayette Music Industry is serving primarily local clients. Across the majority of the Industry client base, 77% are local, 23% are national, and 6% are international. This highlights a strong local focus as well as some national clients and a few international.



"Industry professionals are willing to share their creative talents, which leads to increasingly interesting works."

"The industry needs better infrastructure to support musicians, such as booking agencies, managers, and publicists."

"Industry professionals need better tools and a support network to connect musicians with regional, national, and global opportunities."

"The industry should broaden its focus beyond Cajun and Zydeco to include emerging and nontraditional genres."

"Our music ecosystem lacks infrastructure to support a sustainable music industry pipeline."

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Economic Activity

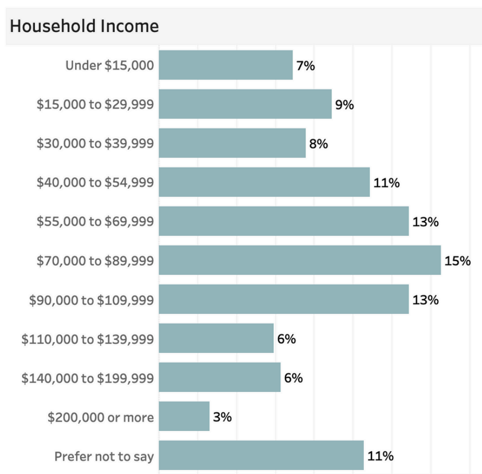
Music significantly contributes to the income of Lafayette music professionals, generating a total of $13.2 million annually across all respondents, with 32% of their annual income coming from music and an average annual income from music being $23,500. The majority of respondents are freelancers (57%) or part of a band (51%), with 68% receiving independent/direct payments. A significant portion, 63%, work outside of music, with 83% of these relying on their outside job as their primary source of income. In publishing and licensing, 52% hold IP rights, with 54% using BMI and 32% using ASCAP for royalty collection. Local performances are more frequent, with a median pay of $200 per local gig compared to $300 for touring. Venues host an average of 55 live events per year, totaling 1,979 events across respondents, with mixed levels of local talent representation in bookings.

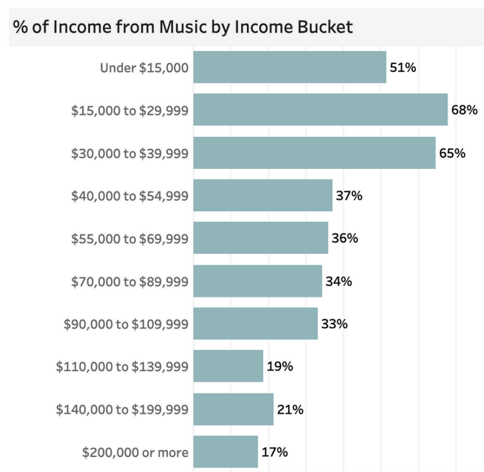
Music generates a total of **$13.2M** in income annually across all respondents

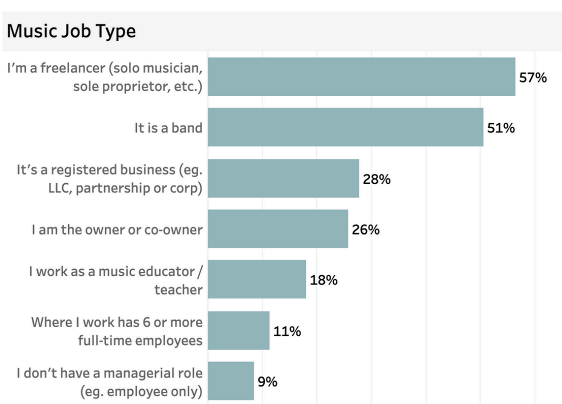
3**2%** of respondent annual income comes from music

Average household income for respondents is **$75K**

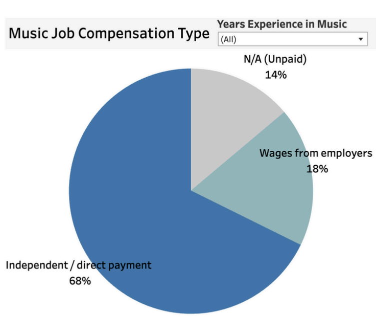
Average annual income from music is **$23.5K**/respondent

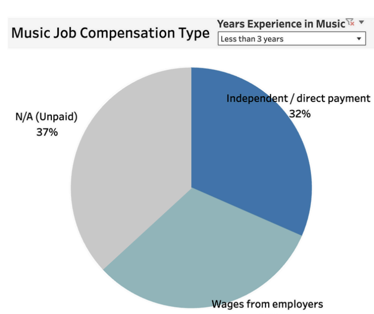


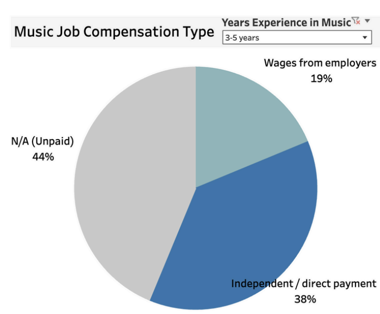




- **Music Job Type/Compensation** - The majority of respondents in Lafayette are freelancers (57%) or part of a band (51%). Independent/direct payment is the predominant form of compensation, accounting for 68% of responses, while 18% earn wages from employers, and 14% report working in unpaid roles. Notably, unpaid roles increase to 44% among respondents with 3-5 years of experience in music, indicating potential challenges for newer entrants. Diverse job types include registered businesses (28%), owners/co-owners (26%), and music educators (18%), reflecting a dynamic and entrepreneurial local music industry.



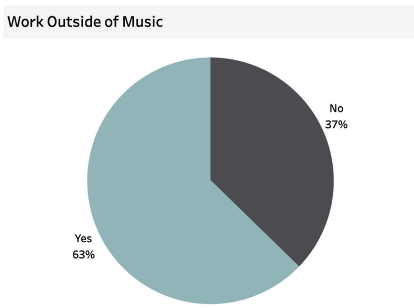


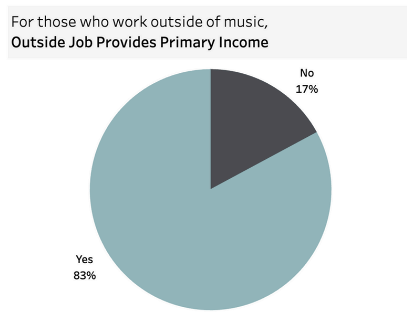


Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

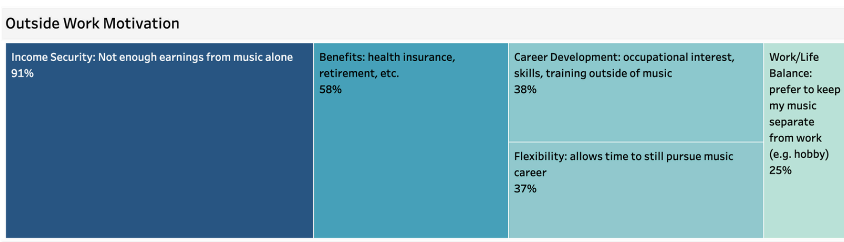
Economic Activity (continued 2/4)

- **Work Outside Music** - A majority of Lafayette's music respondents, 63%, report working outside of music to supplement their income. Of those with external employment, 83% rely on these jobs as their primary source of income. This underscores the financial challenges faced by music professionals in sustaining a career within the industry, with many requiring additional employment to support their livelihoods. Only 37% of respondents do not work outside of music, highlighting the dependency on supplemental income for the majority.



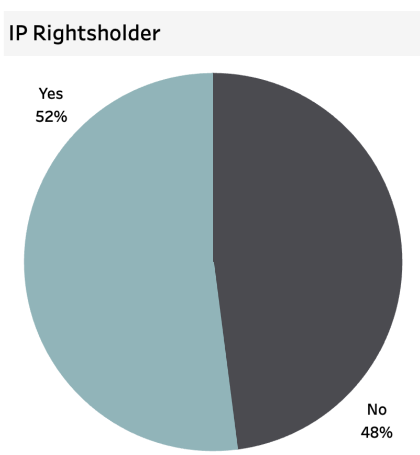


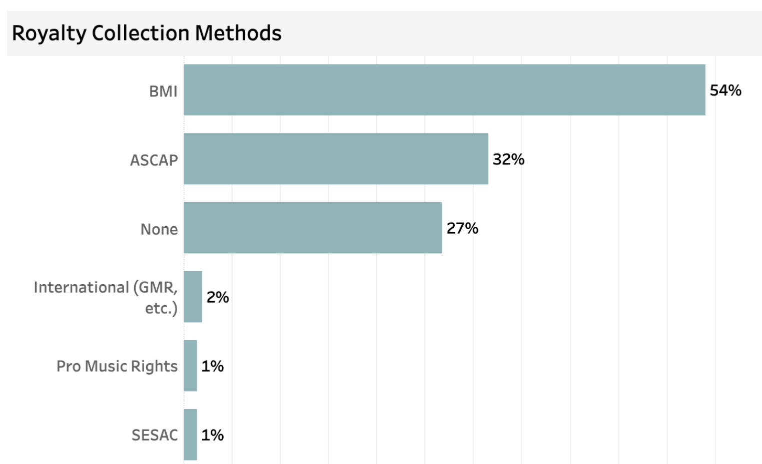
"Many musicians diversify in the music business. They teach, record (engineer), play in different bands, & some have another source of income in addition to music. This has served me well."

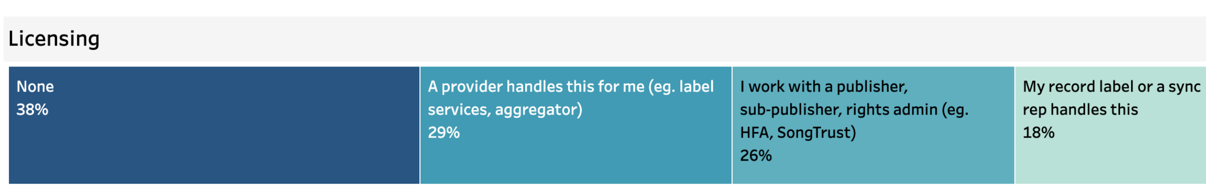


"Programs to educate musicians about how to diversify their income streams (e.g., teaching, licensing, or recording) would be beneficial."

- **Publishing/Licensing** - Among Lafayette music respondents, 52% hold intellectual property (IP) rights, indicating a majority actively engage in retaining ownership of their creative output. For royalty collection, 54% utilize BMI and 32% use ASCAP, while 27% do not use any collection method. Smaller percentages engage with international agencies like GMR, SESAC, or Pro Music Rights. Licensing is an area of varied involvement, with 38% not engaging in any licensing activities. Among those who do, 29% rely on a provider (e.g., label services or aggregators), 26% work with publishers or rights admins, and 18% have their record label or a sync representative handle licensing.



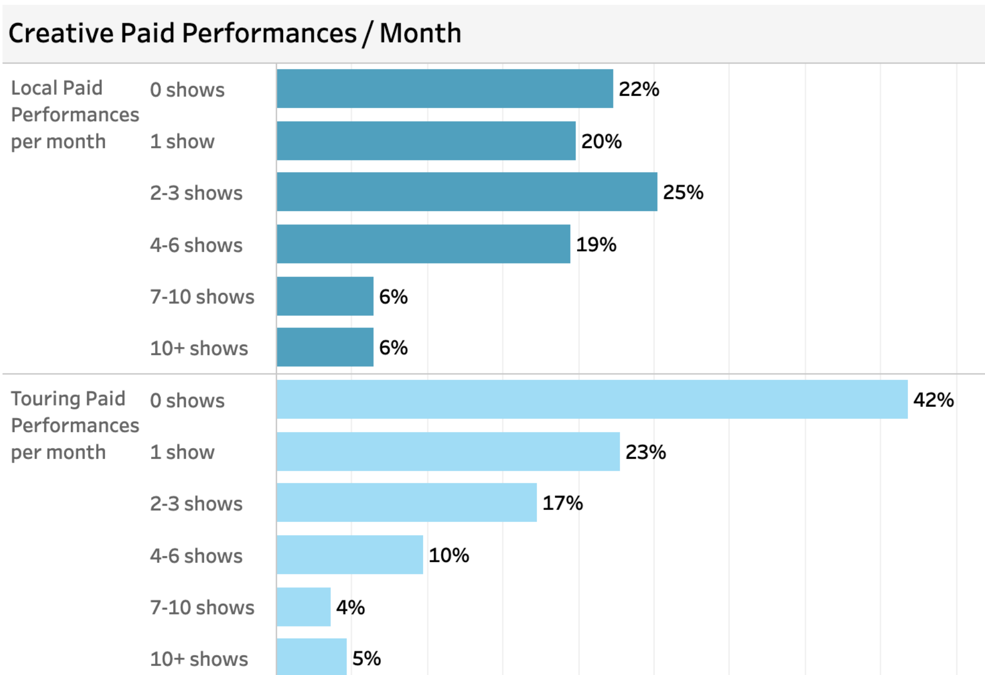




Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Economic Activity (continued 3/4)

- **Creative Performance Frequency & Pay** - In Lafayette, respondents report varying levels of local and touring performance activity. Locally, 20% perform one paid show per month, while 25% perform 2-3 shows, and only 6% perform 10 or more shows. Touring performances are less frequent, with 23% performing one show per month and only 5% performing 10 or more shows. The average pay for a local performance is $482, with a median of $200, while touring performances average $910, with a median of $300. This data highlights the significant disparity in pay between local and touring gigs, with local shows occurring more frequently but at lower pay scales compared to touring performances.



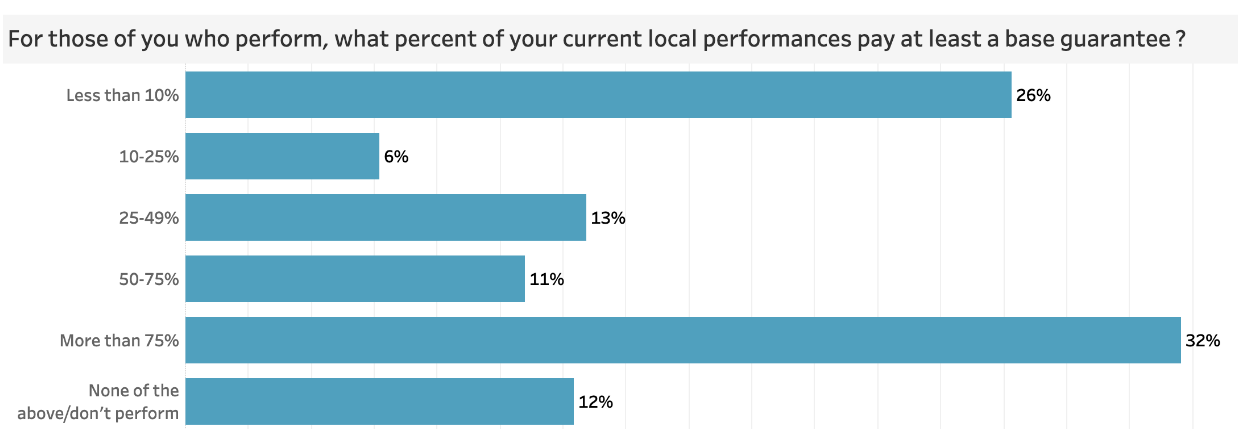
$482
average pay/local gig

$910
average pay/touring gig

$200
median pay/local gig

$300
median pay/touring gig

- **Base Guarantee for Local Performances** - Among respondents who perform locally, 32% report that more than 75% of their performances provide a base guarantee. Conversely, 26% experience this guarantee for less than 10% of their shows, highlighting a significant divide in financial stability across performers. Additional segments show 13% receiving base guarantees for 25-49% of their performances and 11% for 50-75%. A smaller portion, 6%, receive guarantees for 10-25% of their performances, while 12% indicate they do not perform, or their performances lack base guarantees entirely.



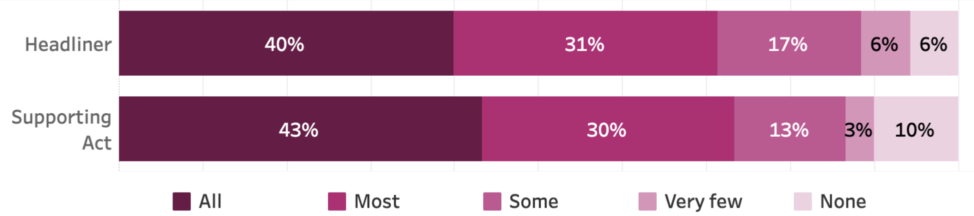
Economic Activity (continued 4/4)

- **Venue Live Events and Local Talent Bookings** - Venues in Lafayette host an average of 55 live events per year, totaling 1,979 events across all respondents. Regarding the booking of local talent, 40% of presenters feature local headliners for all or most of their events, and 43% do so for supporting acts. However, 17% book very few local headliners, while 13% book very few local supporting acts. This indicates a strong presence of local talent in live events, though there remains variability in how consistently presenters engage local artists.

Venues average 55 live events/year

1,979 total live events/year

Presenters Local Talent Bookings / Month



> More training and resources should be provided to educate musicians on licensing, publishing, and royalty collection to maximize income.

> Imagine if at festivals, the food was free to the audience. It would change how people perceive it and spend their money on it within a community. The same needs to happen for music.

> Gig pay is a joke compared to the amount of time we've put in to develop as musicians. If we are so important to the culture of Louisiana, treat us that way!

> We need an organization to help local up-and-coming artists grow and create a path for them to get gigs.

> Our music and its surrounding festival culture has been used to obtain talent, attract tourism, and brag on for decades.

> The culture here teaches people to expect music for free, making it difficult for musicians to command fair wages.

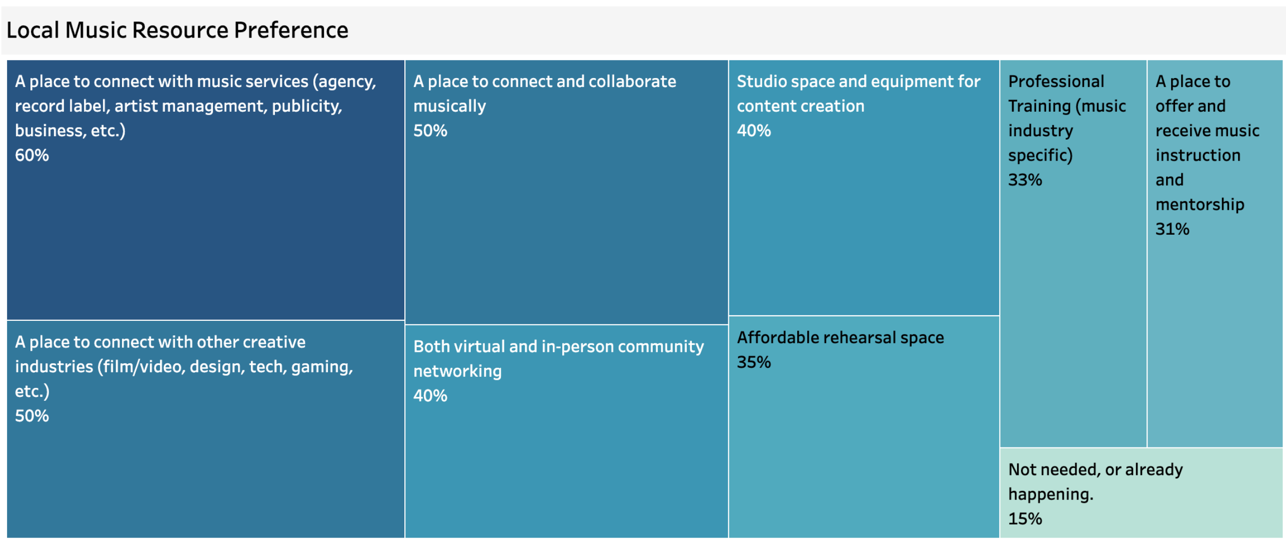
> Local businesses should sponsor music events and partner with musicians to provide financial backing.

> Some venues are working hard to promote their shows and compensate musicians fairly, setting a good example for others to follow.

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Ecosystem Development

Respondents show a strong desire for resources and financial support to sustain and grow the music ecosystem. Key priorities include connecting with Music Industry services (60%) and fostering collaboration with other creatives (50%). Only 27% of respondents received financial assistance, with barriers such as lack of awareness (57%) and limited grant-writing skills (20%). Preferred support includes tax breaks (64%) and micro-grants (57%). Venues and presenters emphasized audience development tools (79%) and best practices for live music (67%). Social media (80%) and word of mouth (61%) are key for discovering music opportunities. Regarding workspace, 66% of live performance venues and 58% of temporary spaces are rented, leaving them vulnerable to market fluctuations.



Local Music Resource Preferences

- 60% Prefer a place to connect with music industry services
- 50% Want a space to connect and collaborate musically.
- 50% Seek connections with other creative industries (film/video, design, tech, gaming, etc.).
- 40% Value studio space and equipment for content creation.
- 40% Favor both virtual and in-person community networking opportunities.
- 35% Need affordable rehearsal space

> There's a need for a private coalition or organization to provide centralized resources for collaboration, mentoring, and services.

> Lack of rehearsal spaces makes it difficult for musicians to prepare for gigs at these venues.

> Our ecosystem is fragmented—there is limited collaboration and a lack of cross-disciplinary events.

> I love this survey and how you are asking local musicians these questions. It shows that people care about music here, and that's why I decided to move to Lafayette.

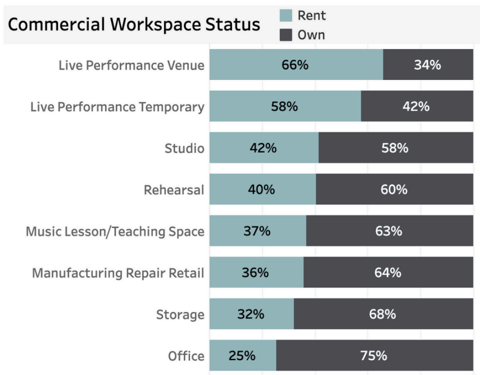
> The local music scene benefits greatly from festivals, which bring visibility to the ecosystem.

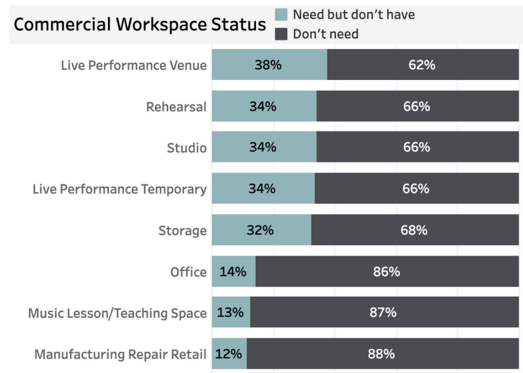
> The focus on Cajun and Zydeco music dominates resources, leaving other genres struggling for visibility.

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

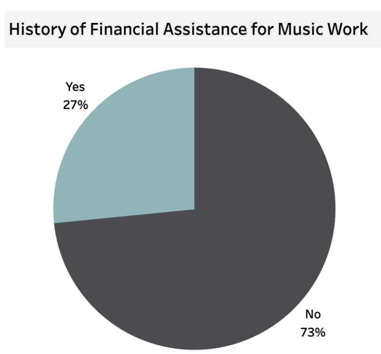
Ecosystem Development (continued 2/4)

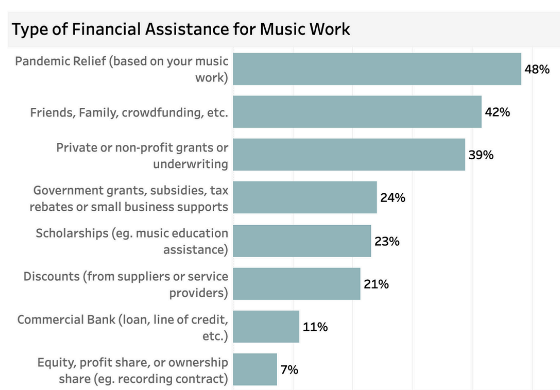
- **Commercial Workspace Status** - The majority of respondents in Lafayette rely on rented spaces for their music-related activities, with 66% renting live performance venues and 58% renting temporary live performance spaces. This reliance on rental spaces is a significant factor, exposing many to economic and market fluctuations. In contrast, ownership is more common for offices (75%) and storage spaces (68%). Rehearsal spaces see a mix, with 40% renting and 60% owning. Studios (42% rent) and teaching spaces (37% rent) also show similar trends, indicating that certain music activities are more stable in owned spaces.



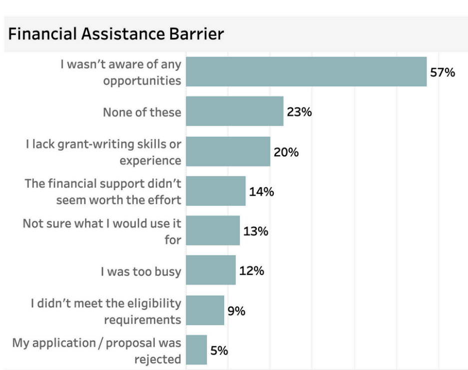


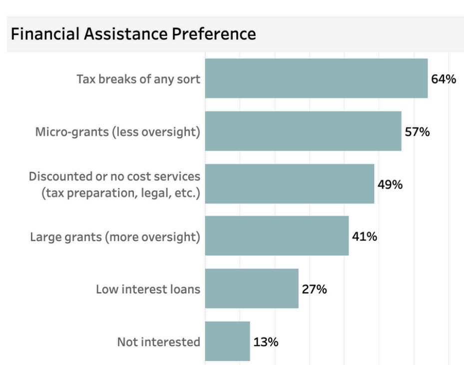
- **Financial Support** - Only 27% of respondents received financial assistance for their music work, primarily from pandemic relief funds (48%), friends and family or crowdfunding (42%), and private or nonprofit grants (39%). Other sources included government grants (24%), scholarships (23%), and discounts from suppliers (21%). Key barriers included lack of awareness (57%), limited grant-writing skills (20%), and perceptions that the effort wasn't worthwhile (14%). Time constraints (13%) and uncertainty about fund use (13%) also posed challenges. Respondents preferred financial support in the form of tax breaks (64%) and micro-grants with less oversight (57%). Discounted services like tax preparation (49%) and larger grants (41%) were also popular options.





> The industry needs more public and private investment to create sustainable pathways for creatives.





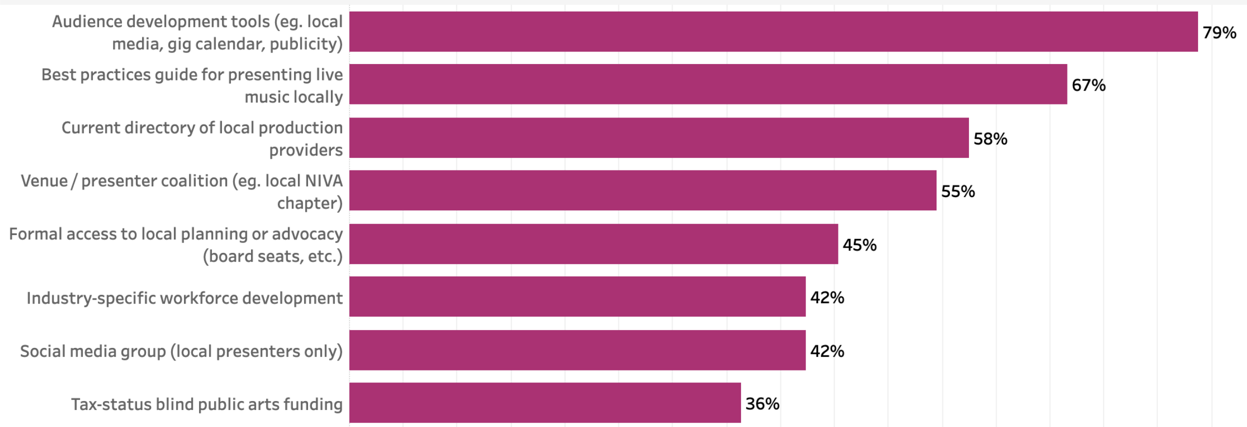
> There's no unified vision or plan to make Lafayette a true music city.

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Ecosystem Development (continued 3/4)

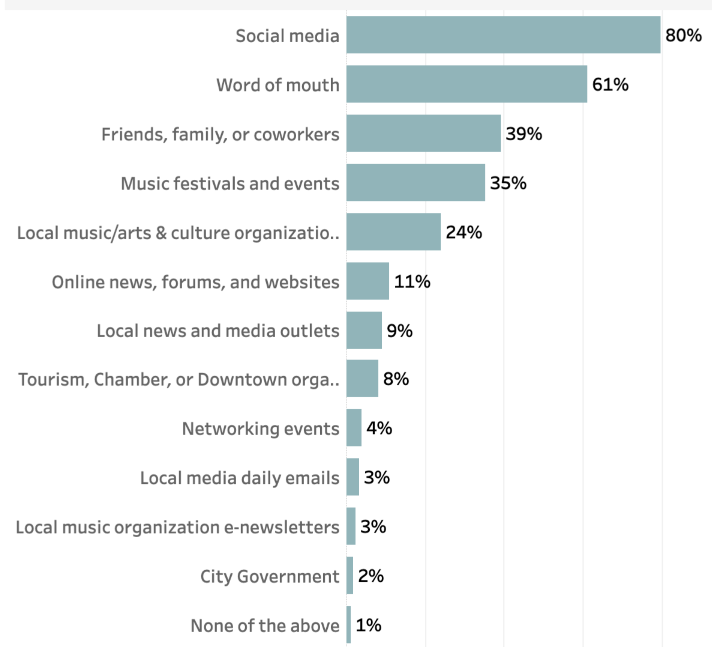
- **Venue/Presenter Business Resources** - Venue/Presenter respondents identified their top preferences for business resources to enhance their operations. Audience development tools, such as local media, gig calendars, and publicity support, were the most desired (79%). A best practices guide for presenting live music locally followed at 67%. Other priorities included a current directory of local production providers (58%) and a venue/presenter coalition like a local NIVA chapter (55%). Formal access to local planning or advocacy, industry-specific workforce development, and social media groups for local presenters were moderately preferred, each at 42-45%. Tax-status blind public arts funding was the least preferred resource, selected by 36%.

Venue/Presenters Preference for Business Resources



- **Information Sources for Music Opportunities in Lafayette** - Social media was the dominant platform for finding out about music opportunities within Lafayette, selected by 80% of respondents. Word of mouth ranked second (61%), followed by friends, family, or coworkers (39%). Music festivals and events also played a role (35%), with local music, arts, and culture organizations chosen by 24%. Online news and forums (11%), local news outlets (9%), and tourism organizations (8%) were used less frequently. City government and local email newsletters were the least utilized (2-3%), with only 1% saying none of the sources were helpful.

What are your top 3 sources/platforms to find out about music opportunities within Lafayette?



> A centralized concert calendar or better communication between venues and musicians would improve booking and attendance.

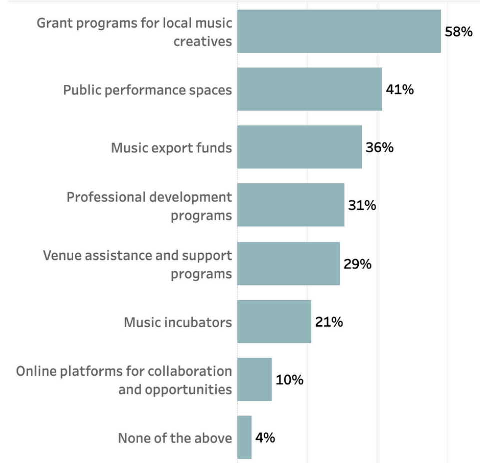
> Venues should invest in better marketing to attract audiences, rather than relying solely on the performers to promote their shows.

> Better marketing and promotion of local talent could attract more audiences willing to pay fair prices for live music.

Ecosystem Development (continued 4/4)

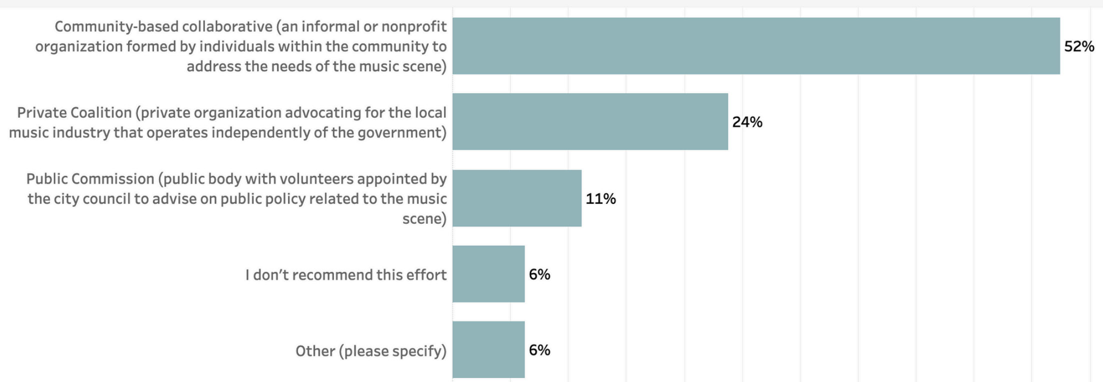
- **Key Initiatives to Foster Lafayette's Music Ecosystem Growth** - Among respondents, grant programs for local music creatives were the most valued initiative for supporting and growing Lafayette's local music ecosystem, chosen by 58% of respondents. Public performance spaces (41%) and music export funds (36%) followed as key priorities. Other notable initiatives included professional development programs (31%), venue assistance and support programs (29%), and music incubators (21%). Online platforms for collaboration and opportunities were less favored (10%), while 4% felt none of the options were relevant.

Which music-related initiatives do you believe would be most valuable for Lafayette to support and grow the local music ecosystem?



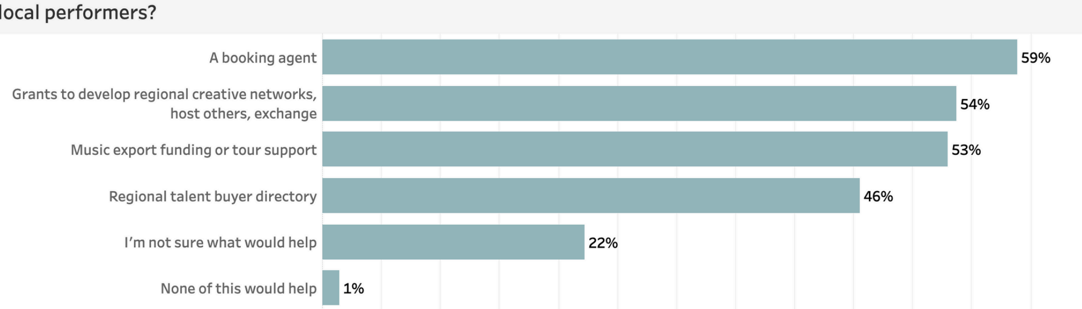
- **Preferred Form for Advocacy** - The preferred form of advocacy for Lafayette's music scene is a community-based collaborative, chosen by 52% of respondents. This collaborative would involve individuals within the community forming an informal or nonprofit organization to address the needs of the music scene. A private coalition, operating independently of government and advocating for the local music industry, was the second most popular option at 24%. A public commission, appointed by the city council to advise on public policy related to the music scene, was supported by 11% of respondents.

If an effort was launched to advocate for the needs of Lafayette's music scene with professional leadership support, what form would you recommend it take?



- **Resources Needed to Support Regional Touring for Local Performers** - A booking agent was identified as the most useful resource to grow regional touring opportunities for local performers (59%), followed by grants to develop regional creative networks, exchanges, and hosting others (54%). Music export funding or tour support ranked third (53%), with a regional talent buyer directory also receiving notable support (46%).

From your experience, can you suggest what resources would be most useful to grow regional touring opportunities for local performers?

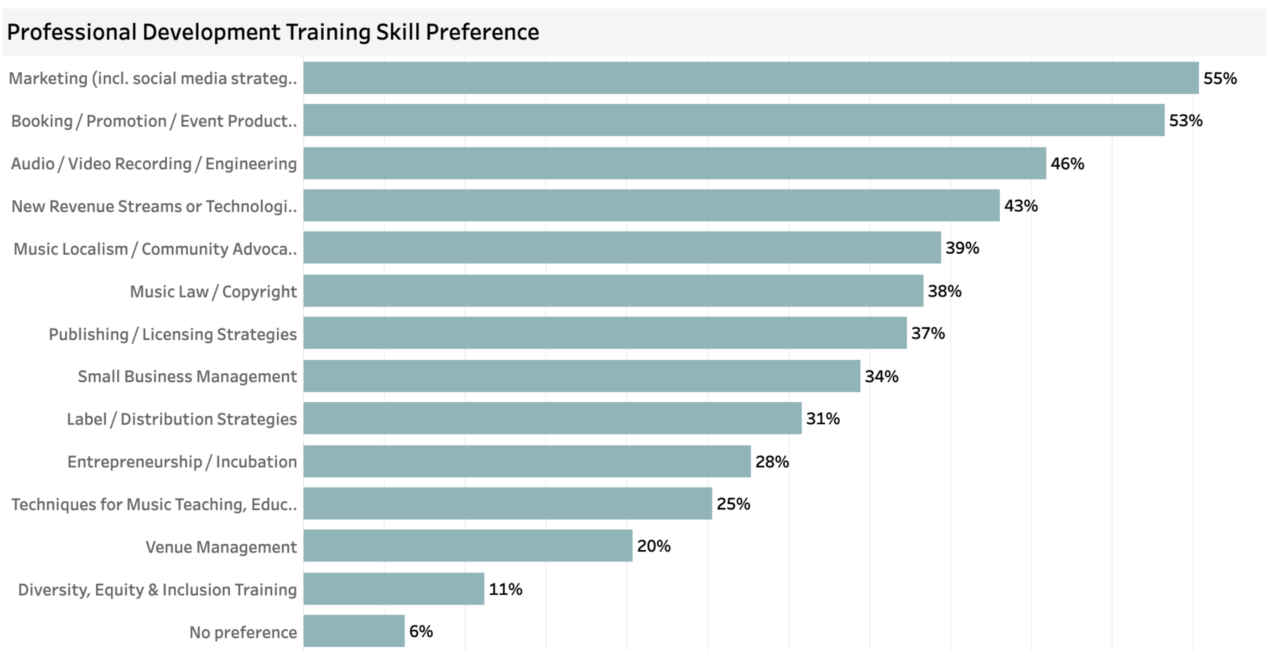


Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Workforce Development

Despite 82% of Lafayette respondents having over 10 years of experience in the music industry, 56% do not hold any memberships or registrations with professional organizations. Among those who do, 32% are affiliated with royalty collection and music licensing organizations, while 13% belong to the Recording Academy. For professional development, respondents prioritize leadership training (50%) and specialized continuing education (46%), with marketing, booking/promotion, and event production emerging as the most desired skills. These findings highlight Lafayette's strong foundation of industry expertise and the opportunity to leverage it through targeted programs and initiatives.

- **Professional Development** - Lafayette respondents exhibit strong interest in professional development training, with marketing (including social media strategies) and booking/promotion/event production emerging as the top preferences, selected by 55% and 53% of respondents, respectively. Audio/video recording and engineering training also ranks highly, with 46% expressing interest. Other notable areas include new revenue streams or technologies (43%), music localism and community advocacy (39%), and music law and copyright (38%). Training level preferences reveal a desire for leadership-oriented programs (50%), followed by continuing education and specialized strategies (46%). Introductory courses, such as publishing basics, are less favored (31%), with 30% indicating no specific preference for training levels.



> Licensing can be a huge income source, but most musicians don't know where to start or how to connect with people in that world.

> We need more workshops, networking, and advocacy for musicians about the resources available to succeed.

> More training and resources should be provided to educate musicians on licensing, publishing, and royalty collection to maximize income.

> We need more targeted workshops, residencies, and mentorship opportunities focused on helping artists build business skills, secure funding, and navigate the complexities of the creative economy.

> Many creatives struggle with finding opportunities to advance their careers, particularly when it comes to funding, business training, and broader exposure

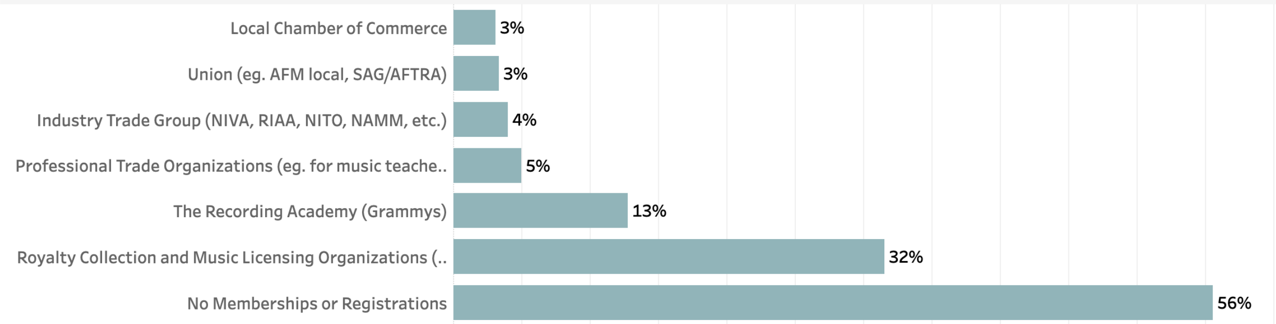
> More programs should help educate artists on how to maximize revenue from publishing and licensing.

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Workforce Development (continued)

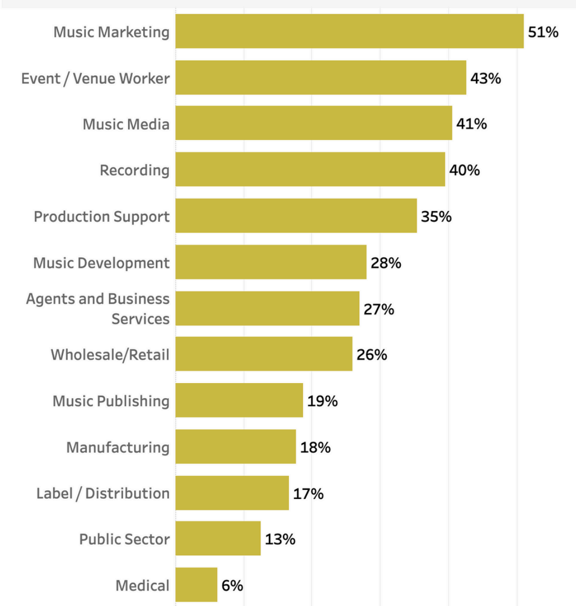
- **Professional Industry Associations** - Over half of respondents in Lafayette (56%) do not hold any memberships or registrations. Among those who do, 32% are members of royalty collection and music licensing organizations, making it the most common affiliation. The Recording Academy is next at 13%, followed by professional trade organizations (5%) and industry trade groups like NIVA or NAMM (4%). Only 3% belong to unions or local chambers of commerce, indicating limited participation in formal professional associations.

Registrations Memberships

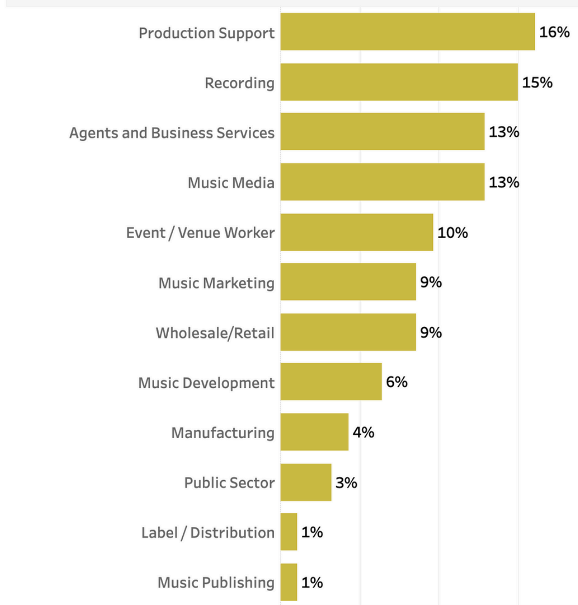


- **Industry Occupation Experience and Current Occupation** – Lafayette's music community demonstrates significant untapped expertise. While 51% have experience in music marketing, only 9% currently work in the field. Similarly, label/distribution (17% experience, 1% current) and music publishing (19% experience, 1% current) highlight key gaps between past experience and current roles. This underutilization presents a clear opportunity to leverage local expertise through mentorships, workshops, and strategic alignment of resources. With its strong traditional music industry infrastructure, Lafayette has the potential to connect experienced professionals with emerging talent, driving growth and strengthening the local music ecosystem.

Industry Occupation Experience



Industry Current Occupation



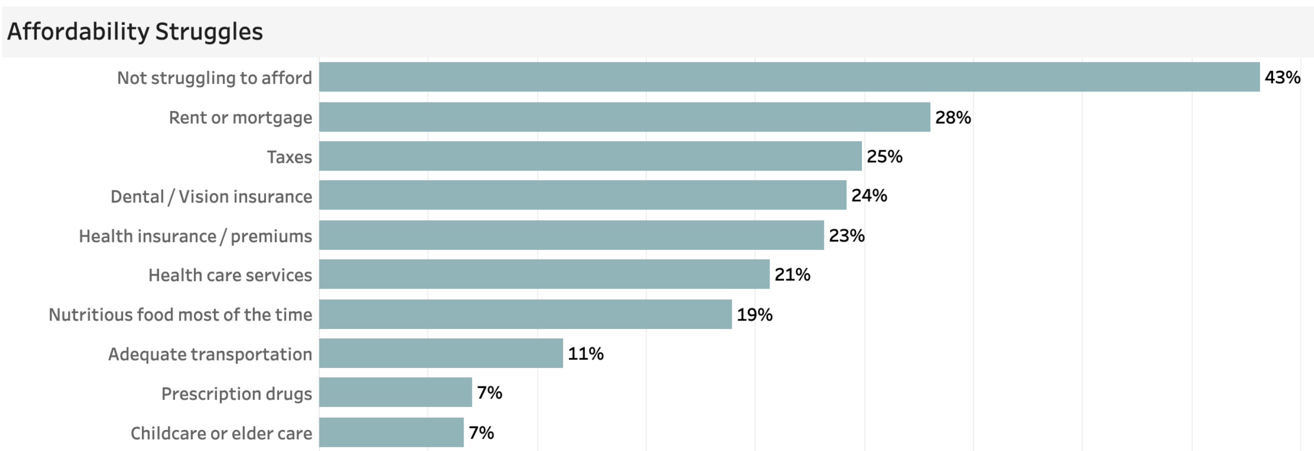
> "We should be teaching musicians to build their audience and avoid playing for tips.

> Going forward, any policy and programs that are informed by this census should be directed by those currently earning a living in the music economy.

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

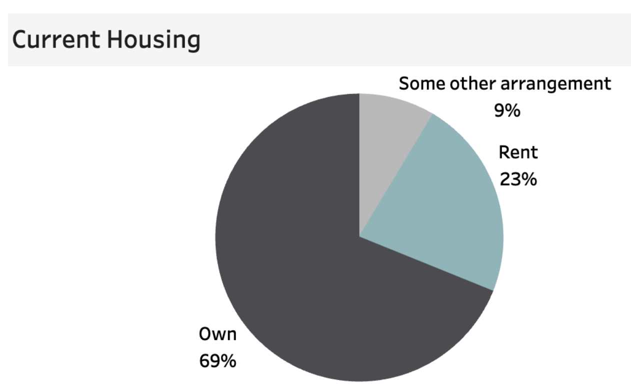
Livability

While 43% of Lafayette respondents report no affordability struggles, significant challenges remain for others. Rent or mortgage payments are a concern for 28%, while 25% grapple with taxes, and 24% face difficulties with health insurance premiums and dental/vision coverage. Music career challenges are dominated by low or uncertain pay (85%) and lack of benefits (74%), with long-term sustainability a concern for 63%. Venue and Presenter respondents emphasize talent costs as the most pressing issue (40%), followed by insurance costs (23%). Despite these challenges, Lafayette boasts a high homeownership rate of 69%, one of the highest across our Music Census work.



- **Affordability** - Survey responses show that 43% of Lafayette music community members report no affordability struggles. However, significant challenges remain for others: 28% struggle with rent or mortgage payments, 25% face difficulties with taxes, and 24% each report issues affording dental/vision insurance and health insurance premiums. Health care services (23%) and access to nutritious food (21%) also represent common concerns. A smaller portion of respondents highlighted struggles with adequate transportation (11%), prescription drugs (7%), and childcare or elder care (7%).

- **Housing** - The majority of respondents (69%) own their home, while 23% rent and 9% have some other arrangement.



"Musicians in this area have to juggle multiple revenue streams to survive, which leaves little time or resources for practice or creative development."

"Because of the abundance of free festivals, people in our area have become used to not paying for music, making it hard for musicians to earn a living."

"Musicians often leave Lafayette for cities like Nashville, where wages and opportunities are better."

"There's a need for venues that can double as all-ages performance spaces, rehearsal spaces, and recording studios at an affordable rate."

"A coordinated effort is needed to teach artists to protect their assets, including financial diversity and affordable resources."

"There is no infrastructure here for rehearsal or practice spaces, which stifles creativity and collaboration."

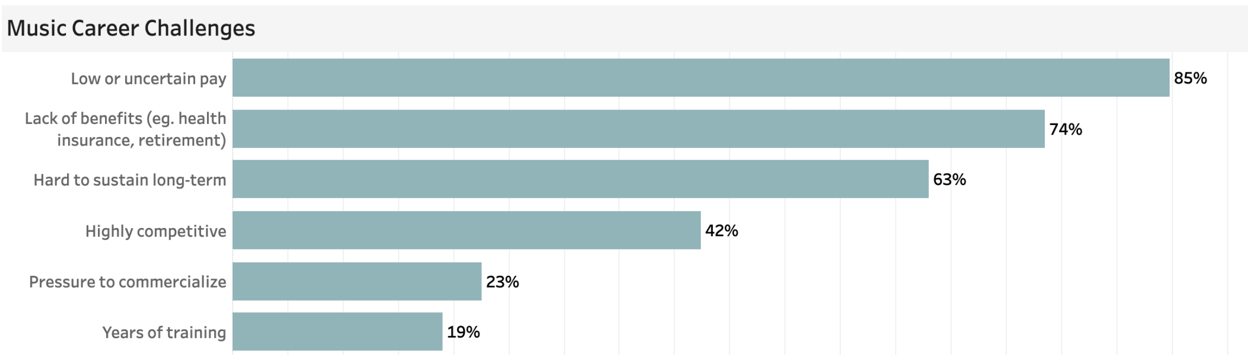
"Public venues like the ACA should be more affordable for local musicians, especially since they benefit from government funding."

"Affordable infrastructure for musicians to record, rehearse, and promote their work is sorely lacking."

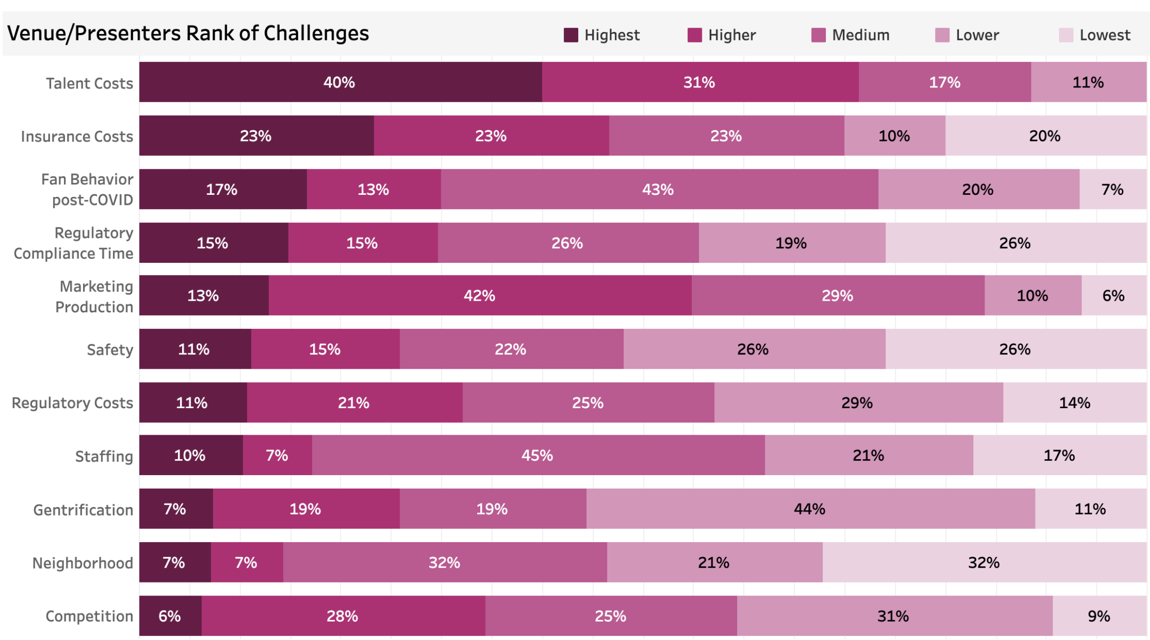
Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Livability (continued)

- **Music Career Challenges** - Respondents in Lafayette face numerous challenges in sustaining a music career, with 85% identifying low or uncertain pay as a primary concern. The lack of benefits, such as health insurance or retirement plans, affects 74%, while 63% report difficulty sustaining a career long-term. The competitive nature of the music industry is highlighted by 42%, and 23% feel pressured to commercialize their work. Additionally, 19% note the significant time investment required for years of training.



- **Venue/Presenters Rank of Challenges** -Venue and presenter respondents in Lafayette identify talent costs as the most pressing issue, with 40% ranking it as the highest challenge and 31% marking it as a higher concern. Insurance costs (23% highest, 23% higher) and fan behavior post-COVID (17% highest, 13% higher) also stand out as significant concerns. Regulatory compliance time (15% highest, 15% higher) and marketing/production costs (13% highest, 42% higher) are additional challenges. Safety, regulatory costs, staffing, gentrification, and neighborhood factors pose medium to lower challenges, highlighting a broad spectrum of operational obstacles for venues and presenters.



> "Groceries, home insurance, and other living costs are skyrocketing, making it impossible to survive on a musician's income here."

> "Affordable health insurance options for musicians would go a long way in helping us sustain our careers."

> "Balancing gigs, a day job, and parenting without affordable childcare is next to impossible in this ecosystem."

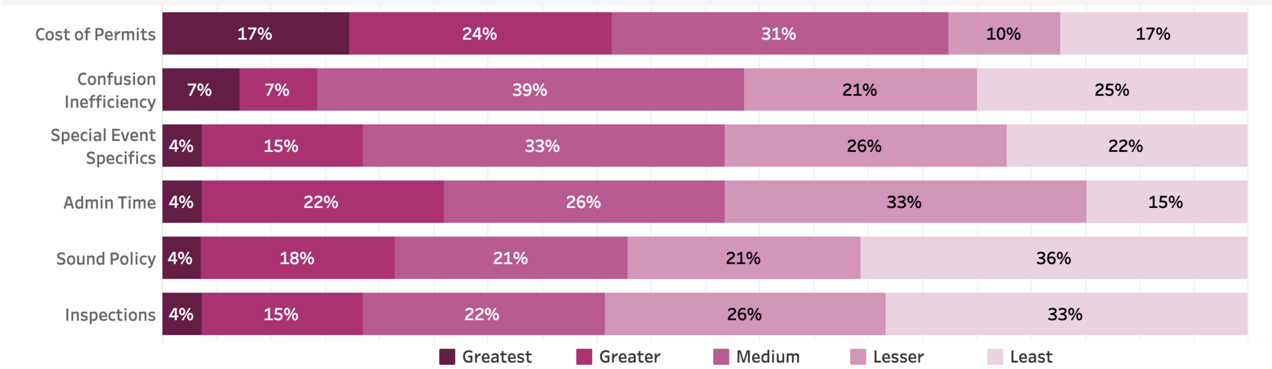
SOUND MUSIC CITIES

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Music-Friendly Policies

Venues and Presenters in Lafayette face a variety of regulatory challenges, with the cost of permits and confusion inefficiency emerging as key frustrations. Security and public safety regulations, as well as street and parking requirements, are the most commonly encountered processes, each cited by 67% of respondents. Financial assistance preferences strongly lean toward tax breaks (64%) and micro-grants with less oversight (57%), while 84% of Venues and Presenters favor regulatory tools such as waivers and incentives to support live music events. Additionally, having an advocate within government, such as an Office of Nightlife or Music, resonates with 69% of respondents, emphasizing the need for clearer processes and proactive support to navigate the regulatory landscape effectively.

Presenters Rank of Regulatory Challenges



- **Regulatory Challenges** - Lafayette's presenters face several regulatory hurdles, with the cost of permits identified as the greatest challenge by 17% and a higher concern for 24%. Confusion and inefficiency rank closely, cited as the greatest challenge by 7% and as a greater challenge by 39%. Other notable issues include special event specifics and administrative time, which 33% of respondents view as medium-level concerns. Sound policy and inspections, though generally rated as lower-level concerns, are ranked as the greatest concern by 4% of respondents each, and as a greater concern by 18% and 15%, respectively. These findings highlight a need for streamlined processes to reduce inefficiencies and cost burdens, while also addressing targeted regulatory pain points.

"Having an advocate within government, such as an Office of Nightlife or Music, would help streamline processes and support live music."

"Street and parking requirements for events are often unclear, making it harder to plan live music events."

"Security regulations for live music venues can be overly strict and expensive to implement, deterring small venue growth."

"The cost of permits for venues and events is too high and discourages smaller shows and independent organizers."

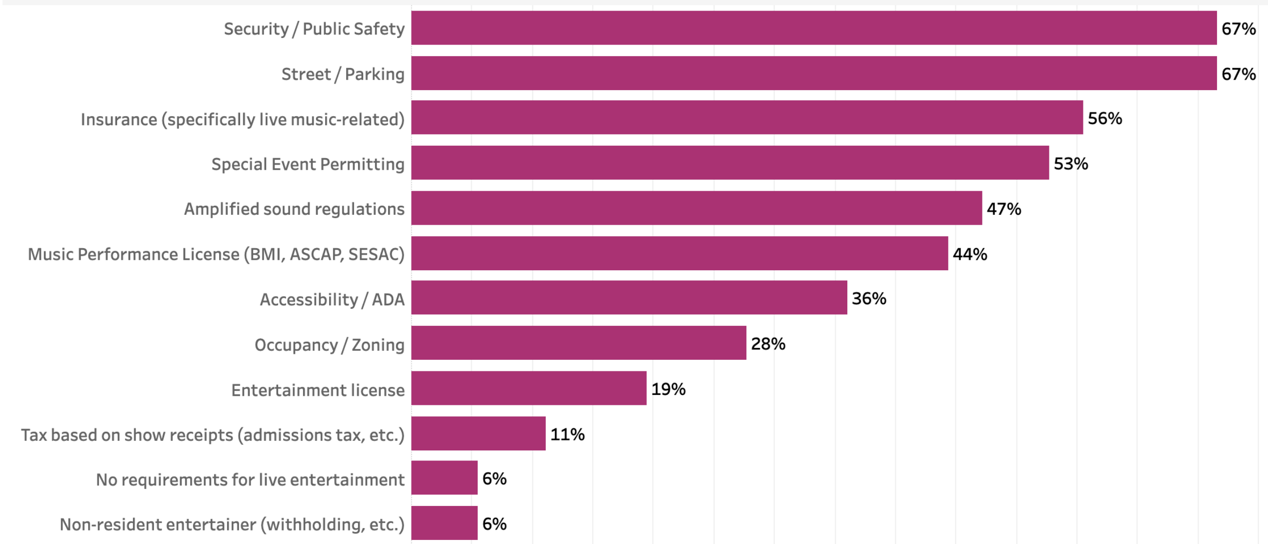
"It's frustrating to navigate the permitting process for events; it's confusing and inefficient."

"Sound ordinances punish venues, especially those near residential areas, despite compliance."

Music-Friendly Policies (continued 2/3)

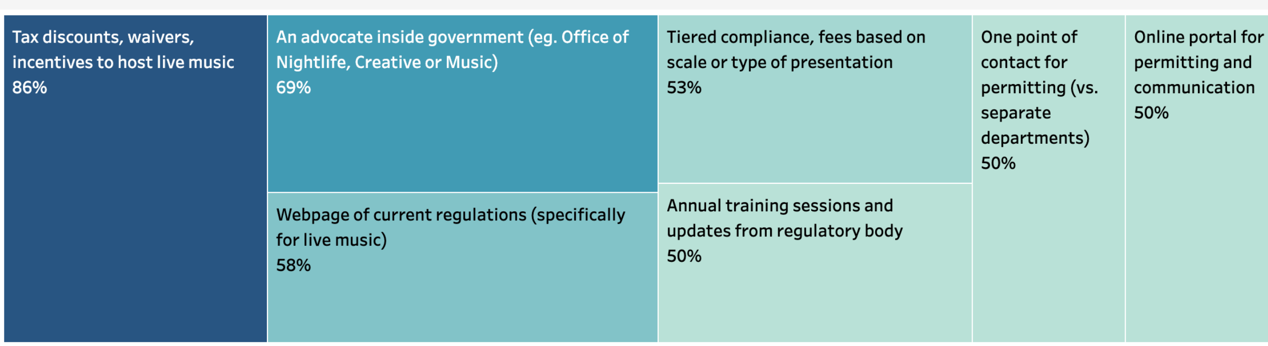
- **Regulatory Fluency** - Venue and presenter respondents in Lafayette encounter various regulatory processes when hosting live entertainment. Security and public safety requirements, along with street and parking regulations, are the most commonly cited, each affecting 67% of respondents. Insurance specific to live music impacts 56%, followed by special event permitting at 53% and amplified sound regulations at 47%. Additional challenges include music performance licenses (44%), accessibility and ADA compliance (36%), and occupancy or zoning laws (28%). Entertainment licenses affect 19%, while taxes based on show receipts and non-resident entertainer requirements are lesser concerns, both at 6%.

Regulatory Processes Encountered to Present Live Entertainment



- **Venue/Presenter Tool Preference** - Respondents strongly favor regulatory tools that encourage and simplify the hosting of live music, with 86% supporting tax discounts, waivers, and incentives. A significant portion (69%) also sees value in having an advocate within the government, such as an Office of Nightlife, Creative, or Music. Preferences for operational improvements include tiered compliance fees based on scale or type of presentation (53%), a webpage of live music-specific regulations (58%), and online permitting portals or single points of contact for permitting (both 50%). Additionally, 50% prioritize annual training sessions and updates from regulatory bodies, emphasizing the need for clear and accessible processes to facilitate live music events.

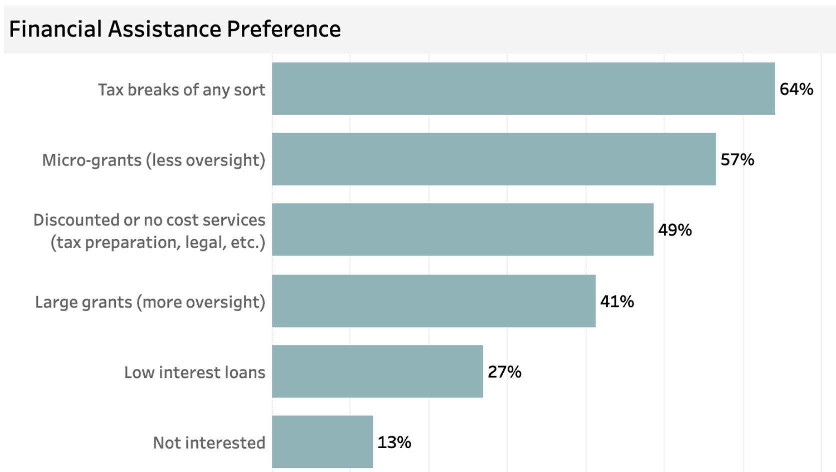
Presenters Regulatory Tools Preference



Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Music-Friendly Policies (continued 3/3)

- **Financial Assistance Preferences** - Respondents express a strong preference for financial assistance in the form of tax breaks, with 64% selecting this option. Micro-grants with less oversight are the next most popular choice at 57%. Discounted or no-cost services, such as tax preparation and legal assistance, appeal to 49% of respondents, while large grants with more oversight are favored by 41%. Low-interest loans are less preferred, with 27% selecting this option, and only 13% of respondents indicated no interest in financial assistance.



> Small, untreated rooms amplify wrong frequencies, making noise regulations crucial but frustrating for small-scale venues.

> Sound ordinances punish venues, especially those near residential areas, despite compliance.

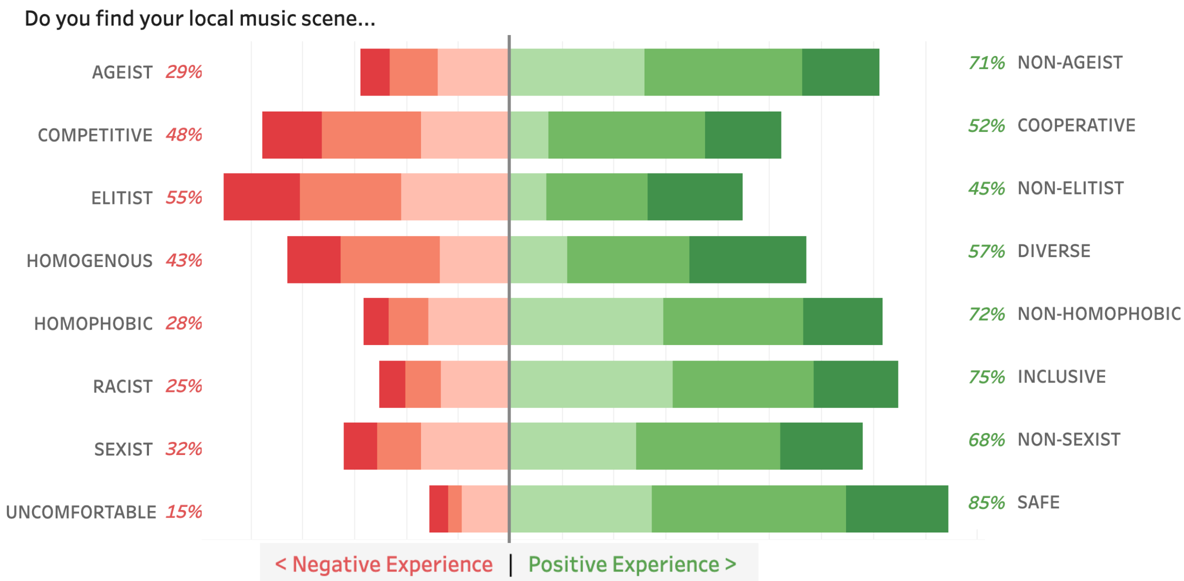
> Smoking and vaping policies at bar venues and public spaces need initiatives for clarity and enforcement

Photo Courtesy of Lafayette Consolidated Government

Music Ecosystem Health Assessment

Culture & Belonging

The Lafayette music ecosystem is largely positive, with a majority of respondents highlighting strengths as it feeling safe and comfortable (85%), inclusive (75%), and non-homophobic (72%), indicating a generally welcoming environment. Additionally, 68% view it as non-sexist, and 57% as diverse. However, challenges remain, with 55% describing the scene as elitist and 48% finding it overly competitive. While areas such as ageism (29%) and sexism (32%) are reported at lower levels overall, specific subgroups experience these negative aspects more acutely, signaling a need for continued efforts to address disparities and foster equity across the community.



Subgroup Insights

Please see the online dashboard at LafayetteMusicCensus.com for full data on each indicator by subgroup. Some overarching themes to the subgroups are:

- **Negative experiences** - Respondents who experience the most negative (red) side of the Lafayette ecosystem are people who identify as Gay or Lesbian. While not quite as consistent but still experiencing the negative side of the music ecosystem frequently are those who identify as Venue/Presenters, people who identify as Black, African, or African American, and people who identify as Two or more races.

> "More opportunities are needed for female artists on bigger stages."

> "This community does not respect women in music."

> "Cultural illiteracy here does not respect Black musicians and women; white male musicians are often glorified despite their behavior."

> "The same six to ten people seem to get the best gigs and local festivals repeatedly."

> "The narrow-mindedness in music and the hetero view that dominates stifles growth for smaller artists."

> "The Lafayette scene can be welcoming, but the competitive nature and lack of inclusivity sometimes make it uncomfortable for newcomers."

Key Insights

Sector Composition: Lafayette enjoys a relatively healthy mix of sector representation across the three sectors. The industry is at 18% which we like to see in the 20% range.

Aging Population of Music Professionals: 63% of respondents are 40 and older, suggesting a need to attract younger talent to sustain the ecosystem long term.

High Levels of Experience: 82% of respondents have over 10 years of experience, reflecting a seasoned but stagnant community, with only 8% having less than 5 years of experience.

Genre Diversity Landscape: While Cajun and Zydeco music are cultural cornerstones of Lafayette's music identity, there is a perception that these genres receive disproportionate opportunities, leaving genres like Rock (42%), Blues (25%), Jazz (13%), Classical (8%), and R&B/Hip-hop (7%) with less visibility and support.

Economic Challenges: Rising costs, stagnant pay rates, and reliance on non music jobs for income. 57% are experiencing affordability struggles.

Regulatory and Permitting Barriers: High cost of permits and confusion and inefficiency create barriers for smaller venues and independent organizers, hindering the growth in the sector.

Beyond Lafayette Parish: Many respondents travel to New Orleans (66%) and Baton Rouge (55%) for music related work, indicating a strong reliance on the regional music network.

Advocacy and Collaboration: 69% of Venues and Presenter respondents want a city government advocate for live music, while 52% of all respondents favor a community-led collaborative to advocate for the local music scene. Partnering these efforts could strengthen advocacy and streamline support, as the City alone cannot address all challenges.

Culture & Belonging Gaps: 55% of respondents perceived the ecosystem as elitist, and 48% viewed it as competitive, signaling barriers for certain subgroups.

Venue/Presenter Needs: 79% of Venue respondents identified audience development as their greatest need, followed by 67% requesting a best practices guide for hosting live music.

Strong Desire for Professional Development: There is significant interest in skills training for booking, marketing, licensing, recording, diversifying revenue streams, and fostering music localism.

Photo Courtesy of Lafayette Consolidated Government

Opportunities

Develop a Music Advocacy Organization: Establish a community-led organization to advocate for live music while complementing with City efforts, such as appointing a dedicated music liaison to streamline regulations and champion the ecosystem's needs.

Promote Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborate with private businesses and local government to fund and promote Lafayette's music ecosystem, including venue development, festivals, and marketing campaigns targeting locals and tourists.

Launch Youth Engagement Programs: Create mentorship programs and performance opportunities for younger musicians by partnering with schools, community organizations, and venues to attract fresh talent and sustain the ecosystem.

Regional Music Alliance: Formalize partnerships with New Orleans and Baton Rouge to strengthen regional collaboration, create touring resources for Lafayette-based artists, and support organic connections.

Streamline Regulatory and Permitting Processes: Simplify live music permitting through an online portal, tiered fee structures, and annual workshops with regulatory agencies to support smaller venues and independent organizers.

Establish a Music Industry Hub: Create a centralized space for collaboration, networking, and education, connecting the creative, industry, and venue/presenter sectors to foster ecosystem growth. Offer workshops on booking, marketing, recording, licensing, revenue diversification, and music localism to empower creatives and industry professionals.

Diverse Genre Programming Support: Provide micro-grants and marketing support for venues to showcase diverse genres like Rock, Blues, Jazz, Classical, and R&B/Hip-hop, alongside culturally significant styles like Cajun and Zydeco.

Expand Audience Development Initiatives: Launch a marketing campaign to attract broader audiences and develop a best practices guide for venues on hosting live music, compliance, and sound management.

Leverage Expertise of Seasoned Professionals: Create mentorship programs and host workshops on emerging trends, leveraging the expertise of seasoned professionals to inspire innovation and attract new talent.

Inclusion and Community Building Programs: Develop initiatives to foster collaboration and inclusivity, addressing perceptions of elitism and competition while supporting underrepresented groups and genres.

Photos Courtesy of Lafayette Consolidated Government