

Comprehensive Music Strategy Report

Lafayette Music Ecosystem

April 2025



Introduction

Lafayette Consolidated Government, in partnership with the Lafayette Economic Development Authority and the Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission, commissioned Sound Music Cities to conduct a music ecosystem assessment and strategy for Lafayette, Louisiana. At the foundation of this data-driven assessment is the Lafayette Music Census which was a community-led initiative organized to gain a better understanding of the current strengths, opportunities, and needs of Lafayette’s music community.

Any strategy to support and grow a music ecosystem starts with knowing who makes it up. Music communities are rarely captured through traditional data sources like labor statistics or economic reports. A music census gathers essential data on the people who make music, the work they do, and the challenges they face. This data creates a baseline for more informed decision-making by policymakers, advocates, and the community at large.

But the value of a music census is not just in the numbers. These efforts spark new energy in communities—helping validate the contributions of working musicians, presenters, and industry professionals. They also lay the groundwork for collaboration, investment, and new policies that reflect the reality of the local scene. Over time, this can lead to more equitable opportunities, stronger infrastructure, and a more vibrant, sustainable music ecosystem.



“In Lafayette, we take our music and our culture seriously. It’s important to make sure we keep our rich heritage of music, especially the people, businesses, and actions at the core of it, thriving.”

Lafayette Music Census

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 data from the Census is available on an interactive dashboard at lafayettemusiccensus.com.

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.



SUMMARY REPORT
January 2025



10 Music Ecosystem Indicators



The Music Census asks questions specific to the realities of music and live entertainment workers, creators, educators and industry including general information about their demographics and occupation types as well as their perspective on issues such as economic opportunity, professional development, affordability, music-friendly regulations, funding support, diversity, and belonging. With a deeper understanding of the Lafayette music ecosystem, the initiative aims to gather, grow, and showcase Lafayette’s music talent and offerings while guiding our city’s efforts to develop this vibrant part of our community.

Recommendations

Following the public launch of the Lafayette Music Census results on February 11, 2025, there were three roundtables (90 minutes) to provide an opportunity for music creators, venue operators, industry professionals, and local leaders to contribute their perspectives and help shape the next steps for Lafayette's music ecosystem. Participants ranked the proposed community actions and identified roles they would offer to make these actions happen. 96% elected to stay involved. Many respondents listed specific talents and skill sets they wanted to offer and others were eager to help in any way needed.

Based on the Census data, the community input, and subsequent discussions with the lead partners, Sound Music Cities has developed a set of recommended following actions, grouped into three steps. While we suggest a sequence to these steps, Lafayette is best positioned to determine a realistic timeline for each. On subsequent pages of this report, each of these actions is described in detail, with ideas and descriptions for each, performance benchmarks proposed, and relevant exemplars to reference.

It will take the whole community to realize this potential.

Public-private partnerships are essential for nurturing and expanding Lafayette's music ecosystem. By combining resources and expertise from both sectors, these collaborations can drive innovation, economic growth, and cultural enrichment.

STEP 1

Foundation: Music Ecosystem Leadership Formation

- Designate a Music Liaison within City Government
- Create an Informal Music Advisory Committee

STEP 2

Phase 1 Community Actions

- Expand Audience Development Initiatives
- Launch Youth Engagement Programs
- Establish a Music Industry Hub
- Support Musician Health & Wellness Access

STEP 3

Phase 2 Community Actions

- Create a Regional Music Alliance
- Streamline Regulatory and Permitting Process

Designate a Music Liaison within City Government

Strengthening communication, accountability, and follow-through across departments to better serve Lafayette's music ecosystem, the City should designate a Music Liaison within municipal government. This role would serve as a consistent point of contact between the music community and City departments, helping to connect questions to answers, raise emerging issues, and support implementation of music-related policies and recommendations.

Key Functions:

- Act as the primary contact for musicians, venue owners, presenters, and partners
- Represent the City in regional and statewide music discussions, including the Regional Music Alliance
- Coordinate across departments (permitting, planning, economic development, etc.) to ensure music-friendly policy alignment
- Track progress on music-related initiatives and performance benchmarks
- Serve as staff support for the informal Lafayette Music Advisory Committee

Approaches and Practices:

- Internal Champion - A dedicated staff person within the local government who speaks music ecosystem fluently.
- Policy Navigation - Helps venues, festivals, and creatives understand and comply with local regulations.
- Resource Connection - Connects music professionals to opportunities, training and city services.
- Community-First Approach - Ensures local voices guide programs and decisions.
- Cross-Departmental Work - Collaborates with economic development, planning, permitting, tourism, and regulatory agencies.
- Data-Driven - Uses census data or assessments to prioritize needs and tracks outcomes.

Exemplar: The State of [Texas's Music Friendly Communities Program](#), administered by the Texas Music Office. A majority of the 70+ cities certified through this program do not have full music offices but do designate a city staff member as a liaison to the music community. This liaison becomes the official point of contact for local musicians, venues, and industry stakeholders.

Recommendations - STEP 1

Foundation: Music Ecosystem Leadership Formation

Create an Informal Music Advisory Committee

The Music Liaison would form a volunteer group of local music stakeholders to act as a sounding board for city staff, strengthen communication, and build trust with the music community. Guided by data from the Lafayette Music Census, this group can help surface issues early, offer grounded input, and ensure the ecosystem is informed and represented.

Approaches and Practices:

- Community-Rooted Membership - Composed of trusted local musicians, venue operators, industry professionals, educators, and culture bearers.
- Diverse Representation- Reflects the ecosystem, genres, roles, demographics.
- Non-Governing - Operates without formal legislative power but offers guidance and feedback to city staff.
- City-Connected - Has a staff liaison who participates or coordinates.
- Clear Purpose - Focused on music census data, strategy input, and advising on regulatory, programmatic, and community partnerships and funding issues.
- Flexible Structure - Meets monthly, with rotating subcommittees to avoid gatekeeping.
- Public-Facing Output - Occasionally publishes letters of support, public recommendations, or program ideas.

Exemplar: Toronto, Canada – Toronto Music Advisory Committee (TMAC)

- Purpose: Provides a forum for exchanging ideas, input, and advice on challenges and opportunities within Toronto's music industry.
- Activities: Advises the city on policies and programs to support and grow Toronto's music sector, ensuring its competitiveness and viability.

Recommendations - STEP 2

Phase 1 Community Actions

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.

Implementation Ideas

Love Lafayette Music Weeks

Host two week-long celebrations of Lafayette's music scene each year. These weeks would highlight local talent across venues, schools, parks, businesses, and cultural spaces — showcasing the depth and diversity of Lafayette's music community.

Give to Lafayette Music Day

As part of one of the Love Lafayette Music Weeks, introduce a community-wide day where participating businesses donate a portion of sales to support local music initiatives. Funds could go toward youth programs, artist grants, or professional development opportunities. The event would also boost business engagement and public visibility for local music causes.

Shared Performance Calendar

Launch a central, easy-to-use Lafayette gig calendar supported by modern, low-maintenance technology. This tool would allow venues, artists, and event organizers to promote upcoming shows in one place, making it easier for audiences to find and attend local music events.

Local Music Journalism Initiative

Partner with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette to build a journalism fellowship or course-based program that supports student writers and storytellers in covering Lafayette's music scene. This initiative would help document the ecosystem, spotlight emerging talent, and build the next generation of local arts journalists.

Student-Led Audience Engagement Working Group

Encourage students from UL Lafayette or other institutions to form a working group focused on how to better connect young people to the local music scene. This group could explore barriers, co-create solutions, and present recommendations to the advisory committee. It's also a chance to build leadership experience and ensure the student perspective is shaping the future of Lafayette music.

Music Venue Best Practices Guide

Develop a shared resource for Lafayette venues that outlines clear, practical guidance on presenting live music. The guide would include tips on sound quality, artist hospitality, promotional planning, production standards, and safety practices — not just rules, but a toolkit for venues to improve the audience and artist experience. It could be developed collaboratively with venue owners, artists, and city staff, and offered as part of an annual training session.

Sponsorship of Emerging Artists: Talent Development Programs: Businesses can establish initiatives to identify and support up-and-coming musicians, providing them with resources such as studio time, mentorship, and marketing support.

Recommendations - STEP 2 Phase 1 Community Actions

Expand Audience Development Initiatives (continued)

Performance Benchmarks Recommended review cycle: every 2 years (next checkpoint: 2027)

| Benchmark Area | 2024 Baseline | 2027 Target | Why It Matters |
|---|--|--|---|
| Local Talent in Bookings | 40% of events have local headliners; 43% include local supporting acts | 50%+ local talent for headliners and support slots | Strengthens local careers, builds regional pride, and boosts audience connection — a key goal of expanding audience development initiatives. |
| Venue Activity | 55 live shows per venue/year (avg) | 65+ shows/year | More live music builds audience habits, supports artists, and grows the cultural economy. Aligns with Priority #1 and Priority #5 (venue vitality). |
| Local Music Visibility & Media | 80% rely on social media; no centralized calendar or media campaign | Launch shared performance calendar & 1 city-led media campaign | Visibility makes it easier for residents to find, attend, and talk about local music. |

Exemplars:

[Hear Fort Worth](#), led by [Visit Fort Worth](#), is a public-private initiative that promotes local artists and connects the music scene to tourism and community engagement. Each year, it hosts a citywide music week with venue showcases, neighborhood events, and performances in unexpected spaces. The program also maintains a shared performance calendar and works with businesses to sponsor emerging artists and host pop-ups. Without a formal music office, Fort Worth has built a collaborative approach that strengthens visibility, supports local talent, and deepens audience participation, all while aligning with broader economic and cultural goals.

[HelloCleveland.live](#) & [DC Music Live](#) – Tech-Supported Gig Calendars

- HelloCleveland.live is a volunteer-run music calendar that aggregates performances across the city using modern, low-maintenance tech tools like automated venue feeds and community submissions. The site is simple, mobile-friendly, and easy to update — making it a cost-effective, grassroots solution that supports both audiences and artists without requiring a large team or budget.
- DC Music Live was developed by local musicians and technologists as a free, centralized platform for discovering live music in Washington, D.C. It uses automation and crowd-sourced data to maintain an up-to-date gig list, and its searchable filters make it easy for fans to find shows by genre, neighborhood, or venue. Its open, scalable tech makes it replicable for other cities like Lafayette.

Chattanooga, TN & Sacramento, CA – Local Music Journalism Initiatives

- In Chattanooga, the [University of Tennessee at Chattanooga \(UTC\)](#) has partnered with local venues and organizations to support student-driven arts and music coverage. Through coursework and internships, journalism students produce stories, profiles, and event recaps that directly support the visibility of Chattanooga’s creative community building real-world experience while filling gaps in local coverage.
- In Sacramento, a [2024 pilot program launched](#) by the City’s Convention & Cultural Services Department pairs local journalists and students with arts organizations to increase coverage of music and cultural events. The program provides mentorship, editorial support, and publication pathways, helping build the next generation of arts journalists while boosting visibility for local talent and venues.

Recommendations - STEP 2

Phase 1 Community Actions

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. Lafayette already has strong foundations in youth music education and community programming. This action step focuses on strengthening awareness, coordination, and sustainability — while expanding performance opportunities and mentorship for the next generation of artists, fans, and music professionals.

Implementation Ideas

Visibility Campaign for Existing Programs

Many strong youth music programs already exist in Lafayette. Help boost their reach through city websites, newsletters, school channels, and community partners. Consider a printed or digital youth music resource guide shared at schools and community events.

All-Ages Music Festival or Showcase

Create a recurring event that centers young performers and welcomes all ages to attend. This could rotate between schools, community spaces, and venues, offering real-world performance experience in a supportive setting.

Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Program

Encourage experienced youth musicians to mentor beginners through structured or informal programs. This reinforces learning, leadership, and community among younger participants.

School and Community Organization Partnerships

Strengthen connections between schools, after-school programs, and community centers to expand access to instruments, instructors, and rehearsal space. Many of these programs exist — this would be about increasing visibility and support.

Performance Pipeline into the Local Scene

Partner with venues and festivals to create designated performance slots or "emerging artist" stages that feature youth performers. Provide mentorship on booking, promotion, and stage etiquette to support their development.

Creative Third Spaces

Support the use of flexible, welcoming spaces, such as libraries, rec centers, or cultural hubs, for music creation, open mics, jam sessions, or songwriting workshops. These informal settings are critical for access and experimentation.

Recommendations - STEP 2 Phase 1 Community Actions

Launch Youth Engagement Programs (continued)

Performance Benchmarks Recommended review cycle: every 2 years (next checkpoint: 2027)

| Benchmark Area | 2024 Baseline | 2027 Target | Why It Matters |
|--|--|---|--|
| Youth Engagement & Training | Only 7% of respondents are under age 25; limited formal programs exist | Launch 3+ youth-focused programs; 100+ young participants engaged | Investing in younger musicians is critical for ecosystem renewal and long-term sustainability. |
| Youth-Focused Public Programs | Existing programs are siloed or under-promoted | Launch 3+ youth-facing events or initiatives annually | Builds regular opportunities for performance, leadership, and mentorship. |
| Student-Led Initiatives | Informal or ad hoc | Establish 1 youth advisory or working group with clear input pathways | Empowers youth voice in shaping local music strategy and program design. |

Exemplars:

New Orleans supports youth engagement through programs like *Roots of Music* and *Upbeat Academy*, which train young musicians in performance and production while connecting them to real-world stages. While run by nonprofits, these programs are often promoted or supported through city partnerships, libraries, and cultural events. This model shows how mentorship, flexible spaces, and youth-centered performances can build lasting engagement and career pathways without needing a centralized city-run program.

Youth on Record is a nonprofit that partners with Denver schools and community spaces to provide music education, mentorship, and paid fellowships for young people aged 11–24. Through songwriting, audio production, and live performance, students gain both creative and career skills. YOR also hosts open mics, block parties, and showcases that build visibility for emerging talent. It’s a strong model of how youth programs can mix artistry, access, and real-world experience, especially when powered by working musicians and educators.

Recommendations - STEP 2

Phase 1 Community Actions

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.

Implementation Ideas

Lafayette Music Newsletter

Launch a monthly community newsletter to share upcoming shows, workshops, artist spotlights, community advocate spotlight, opportunities (grants, calls for musicians, mentorships), venue updates, and industry tips. It would act as the connective tissue across the music ecosystem, reaching musicians, fans, venues, educators, and civic partners. The tone should be accessible and community-driven, with contributions from local voices and organizations. Hosting could rotate or live under a trusted nonprofit or cultural organization.

Music Hubs – virtual and physical space

A series of smaller hubs utilizing existing spaces, such as venues and other cultural and creative spaces. These hubs would provide a nexus for music services, collaboration among musicians, and connections with other creative sectors. They could also offer essential resources like affordable rehearsal areas, professional training, and studio space/equipment for content creation. Additionally, these hubs would serve as venues for both virtual and in-person networking, supporting the community's desire for a versatile and accessible musical environment in Lafayette.

Mentorship

With so many people in Lafayette with 10+ years of experience, mentorship initiatives could plug in the experience across the ecosystem in a meaningful way. If this were implemented across different sectors, there could be opportunities to convert the DIY into doing it together.

Music Technology Innovation

Investment in Music Startups: Private companies can invest in or partner with music tech startups to develop new platforms or tools that benefit both artists and consumers.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

Community Music Projects: Companies can fund community-based music programs that offer free or subsidized music lessons, instrument donations, or support for school music programs, demonstrating a commitment to cultural development.

Recommendations - STEP 2 Phase 1 Community Actions

Establish a Music Industry Hub (continued)

Performance Benchmarks (Recommended review cycle: every 2 years (next checkpoint: 2027))

| Benchmark Area | 2024 Baseline | 2027 Target | Why It Matters |
|---|---|--|---|
| Industry Sector Growth | 18% of ecosystem identifies as “Industry” | Raise to 22% | A stronger industry backbone supports creatives, reduces burnout, and retains talent. |
| Use of Local Music Services | 78% self-manage publicity; 73% self-book | 25% increase in use of local music business services | Building trust and visibility for local industry resources improves professionalism. |
| Centralized Communication | No regular ecosystem newsletter or directory | Launch monthly Lafayette Music Newsletter | Keeps the community informed, promotes collaboration, and increases engagement. |
| Mentorship & Knowledge Sharing | Informal only | Launch at least 1 mentorship cohort or event annually | Converts individual experience into shared growth and sector resilience. |
| Community Events & Workshops | No regular convenings or knowledge-sharing sessions | Host 6+ workshops, mixers, or networking events per year | Builds peer support, mentorship, and creative cross-pollination. |

Exemplars:

Music Everywhere Charlotte is a nonprofit-led initiative supported by the city that connects stakeholders across the music industry. The Music Everywhere CLT Newsletter is a regular digest featuring shows, grants, artist and venue spotlights, and business resources, serving as a central communication hub for Charlotte’s music community. The initiative also hosts industry roundtables, mixers, and working groups, providing opportunities for collaboration, feedback, and shared problem-solving. Its success lies in balancing grassroots energy with strategic partnerships, helping unify Charlotte’s diverse music scene through consistent communication and connection.

Founded by David Porter in Memphis, TN, The Consortium MMT (Memphis Music Town) offers professional development, mentorship, and industry education for emerging musicians. Through workshops, one-on-one mentoring, and access to music business leaders, the program helps local talent transition into sustainable careers. It also collaborates with studios and venues to support real-world experience. This is a model for how mentorship and training can be embedded within a regional music hub framework — with a balance of nonprofit and private support.

Portland’s Hallowed Halls is a community-oriented recording studio and music hub housed in a converted library. In addition to being a studio, it hosts workshops, showcases, and networking events, and rents affordable rehearsal and performance space to local artists. Though privately owned, it functions like a shared hub — emphasizing access, affordability, and collaboration. It demonstrates how existing buildings can be repurposed into flexible music spaces that anchor a local ecosystem.

Recommendations - STEP 2

Phase 1 Community Actions

Support Musician Health & Wellness Access

The Lafayette Music Census revealed what many in the community already know: access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare remains a major challenge for working musicians and other music professionals. Many are uninsured, underinsured, or relying on non-employer sources of coverage, making basic care, mental health services, and preventive treatment difficult to access. A healthy music ecosystem includes the well-being of the people who create, perform, and support the music. This recommendation proposes a low-barrier, community-driven approach to improving health outcomes for Lafayette's creative workforce.

Implementation Ideas

Create a Local Music Health & Wellness Resource Guide

Compile and promote a regularly updated directory of local clinics, therapists, dental resources, and music-friendly health providers including those offering sliding-scale or free services.

Explore a Local “HAAM Day”-Style Fundraiser

As part of one of the Love Lafayette Music Weeks, encourage businesses to donate a portion of proceeds to support local musicians' health access including mental health, dental, and preventative care. Funds could be distributed via a trusted nonprofit partner.

Partner with Local Health Providers for Musician Clinic Days

Coordinate occasional pop-up care events, free flu shots, wellness checks, dental screenings in collaboration with local clinics, universities, or health orgs.

Advocate for State and Local Policy Support

Work with public health departments and regional arts organizations to identify state-level opportunities that could provide more consistent coverage options for independent creatives.

Normalize Mental Health Support in the Music Community

Include mental health resources, peer support spaces, and awareness campaigns as part of broader wellness strategies embedded in the Music Industry Hub and Music Newsletter.

Recommendations - STEP 2

Phase 1 Community Actions

Support Musician Health & Wellness Access (continued)

Performance Benchmarks (Recommended review cycle: every 2 years (next checkpoint: 2027))

| Benchmark Area | 2024 Baseline | 2027 Target | Why It Matters |
|--|--|---|---|
| Health Resource Awareness | No centralized list or guide | Launch and maintain Music Health & Wellness Resource Guide | Improves access by connecting creatives to affordable and music-friendly providers. |
| Access to Basic & Preventive Care | No pop-up clinics or musician-specific events | Host 3+ Musician Clinic Days annually | Lowers barriers by offering care in trusted, accessible settings. |
| Wellness Fundraising & Support | No coordinated effort | Launch one annual HAAM-style fundraiser for musician health | Creates sustainable funding for wellness initiatives through community buy-in. |
| Mental Health Integration | Mental health rarely discussed in public-facing programs | Include mental health resources in 100% of industry hub events or newsletters | Reduces stigma and normalizes support as part of everyday music work. |

Exemplars:

The New Orleans Musicians' Clinic (NOMC) has provided affordable, culturally responsive healthcare to local musicians and culture bearers since 1998. In partnership with LSU Health and a nonprofit foundation, NOMC offers primary care, mental health services, wellness screenings, and mobile outreach designed around the real needs of working creatives.

In Austin, the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM) connects low-income musicians to medical, dental, and mental health care through a large network of providers. Its annual fundraiser, HAAM Day, engages local businesses and venues to raise money and awareness for musician wellness.

Recommendations - STEP 3

Phase 1 Community Actions

Create a Regional Music Alliance

Recent census data reveals that a significant number of Lafayette's music professionals are engaging in regional travel for performances, collaborations, and other music-related endeavors. This mobility underscores the interconnected nature of the regional music scene and presents an opportunity to formalize these relationships through a structured alliance. The Regional Music Alliance would operate as a public-private partnership, encouraging collaboration between government, cultural institutions, and the private music sector to support regional growth and artist mobility.

Implementation Ideas

Export Platform for Lafayette Talent

Establish artist exchange programs and regional booking circuits to facilitate performances in neighboring cities such as Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lake Charles, Houston, and beyond. This initiative aims to promote Lafayette musicians while also attracting regional talent to our city, fostering a dynamic cultural exchange.

Shared Touring & Booking Infrastructure

Develop a comprehensive resource database encompassing venues, booking contacts, festivals, and media outlets across the region. This tool will assist local artists in navigating new markets and streamline the booking process.

Unified Advocacy

Collaborate on messaging that highlights the economic and cultural impact of music, aiming to influence state cultural policies, tourism strategies, and funding allocations.

Regional Events & Showcases

Organize annual summits or showcases that rotate among member cities, including Lafayette. These events will serve to build connections among artists, venues, media, and industry representatives throughout the region.

Collaborative Media & Promotion

Launch digital campaigns or online platforms that feature artists and events from all partner cities, enhancing visibility and audience engagement across the region.

Professional Development Opportunities

Offer joint workshops, co-learning series, and mentorship programs that leverage the expertise of seasoned professionals from various cities, benefiting emerging artists and industry personnel.

Recommendations - STEP 2 Phase 1 Community Actions

Create a Regional Music Alliance (continued)

Performance Benchmarks (Recommended review cycle: every 2 years (next checkpoint: 2027))

| Benchmark Area | 2024 Baseline | 2027 Target | Why It Matters |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regional Collaboration Structure | Informal gig travel to Baton Rouge (55%) and NOLA (66%) | Establish Regional Music Alliance with MOU, shared platform, and city liaisons | Formal structure helps shift from ad hoc travel to consistent, strategic collaboration. |
| Touring Support Tools | No shared booking/touring resource | Launch shared database of regional venues, media, and booking contacts | Lowers the barrier to regional touring and supports artist mobility. |
| Joint Events or Showcases | None coordinated through regional collaboration | 2+ regional showcases or summits hosted annually across partner cities | Builds stronger artist-to-artist and city-to-city relationships. |
| Professional Development Access | Locally-based only | 4+ regional workshops or mentorship sessions open to all alliance cities | Shared learning supports equity and professional growth across the region. |
| Unified Messaging & Advocacy | No coordinated campaign | Develop a shared message on music's economic/cultural value for state/funding use | Aligning voices builds statewide influence on policy and funding decisions. |

Exemplars:

Through the [Tennessee Entertainment Commission](#) and statewide programs, cities like Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga share data, promotional tools, and strategy to grow Tennessee's creative economy. While Nashville and Memphis have distinct scenes, they coordinate on advocacy, economic development, and export platforms. Their work helped influence state-level tax incentives and tourism campaigns tied to music — showing how regional collaboration can produce tangible policy and visibility outcomes.

Northwest Arkansas (NWA) Municipal Arts Alliance: This initiative convenes five municipal governments across NWA to engage in ongoing dialogue centered on cultural belonging. By integrating arts and culture into regional planning, the alliance aims to influence policies related to growth, housing, parks, and mobility, ensuring that cultural considerations are at the forefront of municipal decision-making.

Established in 2013, the [Austin-Toronto Music City Alliance](#) is a pioneering public-private partnership aimed at accelerating the music industries in both cities. This collaboration focuses on joint programming, trade partnerships, and business ventures to create jobs and expand revenue streams. By facilitating artist exchanges and industry networking, the alliance has strengthened the cultural and economic ties between Austin and Toronto, serving as a model for international music city partnerships.

Recommendations - STEP 3

Phase 2 Community Actions

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. The goal is to make it easier, not harder to present live music in Lafayette. Lafayette's music ecosystem depends on venues, businesses, and creatives being able to present live music without navigating excessive red tape. Current processes for sound and event permitting are inconsistent and time-consuming, limiting growth and discouraging new or smaller players from participating. Updates to these systems will improve compliance, reduce conflict, and support a thriving live music culture.

Implementation Ideas

Host a Venue/Presenter Summit

Organize an annual summit led by City regulatory agencies and departments — including permitting, police, fire, and planning — to meet directly with venue owners and presenters. This forum would identify barriers, clarify processes, and build better communication and trust between the City and the live music community.

Create an Annual Sound Permit Option

Currently, venues must apply for temporary sound permits multiple times per year. Introduce an annual sound permit for qualifying venues, reducing administrative burden and helping venues plan more effectively.

Clarify and Centralize Permitting Information

Develop a single point of entry that outlines sound, live entertainment, occupancy, and alcohol-related permit requirements in clear language.

Develop a Tiered Permit System

Allow for different permit types based on the size, location, and frequency of events. For example, smaller acoustic sets or occasional performances could be covered under a simplified, low-cost option.

Align City Departments on Music-Friendly Goals

Ensure departments involved in enforcement or regulation share a consistent understanding of Lafayette's commitment to a vibrant music scene. Consider regular internal check-ins and shared training materials.

Introduce a Sound Impact Plan Option

Give venues the opportunity to submit a proactive Sound Impact Plan, outlining their approach to managing volume, timing, and communication with neighbors, as a path toward securing longer-term permitting or regulatory flexibility.

Support Training on Regulatory Compliance

Include permitting guidance and compliance tips as part of the **Music Venue Best Practices Guide** and offer workshops in partnership with city staff.

Recommendations - STEP 3 Phase 2 Community Actions

Streamline Regulatory and Permitting Processes (continued)

Performance Benchmarks (Recommended review cycle: every 2 years (next checkpoint: 2027))

| Benchmark Area | 2024 Baseline | 2027 Target | Why It Matters |
|---|---|--|--|
| Local Retention of Creative Spend | 50% of creatives' \$3M in annual expenses stay in Lafayette | Raise to 60% retention | Keeping creative spending local grows the ecosystem from within — strengthens small businesses and reduces economic leakage. |
| Regulatory Support & Advocacy | Top challenges include high permit costs, confusion, and inefficiency (67%+ affected) | Appoint a City Music Liaison; reduce permit-related complaints by 25% | Venues and presenters need clearer processes and a point person in city government to navigate permitting, advocate for music, and streamline efforts. |
| Sound Policy & Outdoor Stage Permits | No annual permit option for outdoor stages; sound rules unclear and inconsistent | Launch annual outdoor stage permits and publish sound policy guide by 2026 | Transparent, music-friendly sound policy reduces friction, supports outdoor venues, and ensures consistent rules for both artists and neighborhoods. |

Exemplars:

Austin introduced a **Sound Impact Plan** option that allows venues to proactively outline how they'll manage volume, hours, and neighborhood communication. The city also offers an **Annual Outdoor Music Venue Permit**, reducing repetitive paperwork and helping venues operate more predictably.

Seattle's **Special Events Committee** coordinates across city departments to streamline permitting. Its **tiered system** makes it easier and cheaper for smaller venues and low-risk events to comply, encouraging broader participation in the local music economy.

San Francisco's **Entertainment Commission** serves as a centralized hub for venue and event permitting. It offers clear guidance, regular outreach to presenters, and public forums that improve transparency and trust between the city and the live music community.

Sacramento recently launched a **Limited Entertainment Permit** tailored for smaller venues like restaurants and cafes, reducing fees and inspections. The city also created an **Entertainment Services Division** to act as a single point of contact, making the permitting process more accessible and artist-friendly.