

Gender Equity Working Group Recommendation to Austin Music Commission *Draft 6/4/2021*

RECOMMENDATION

The Gender Equity Working Group of the Austin Music Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to allocate a one-time use of the \$650,000 transferred into the **Live Music Fund** immediately during the remainder of FY2020-21 to be used for the following:

RATIONALE & DESCRIPTION

Musician Reimbursement Program

- Establishing a grant program to reimburse booking guarantees for local musicians in which venues pay musicians a fair wage and are thusly reimbursed through the program. Additionally, this program will provide funds to reimburse guarantees for local acts hired as support for touring artists. Individual musicians will also be able to apply to use this funding to support independently produced public live music events. This is intended to offset real costs during reopening, incentivize booking, provide a boost to our music ecosystem, and ultimately to drive income for local musicians.
- Musician Reimbursement program should establish a set of eligibility criteria through engagement with stakeholders and such criteria should prioritize diversity of race, gender, sexual identity. Eligibility requirements should also consider geography of Live Music Venue recipients to incentivize diversity of representation of music throughout the City of Austin and Extraterrestrial Jurisdiction (ETJ).
- As originally recommended by the Visitor Impact Task Force, which provided the original HOT recommendations for music in 2017, the Musician Reimbursement Program should be administered by a third-party entity and the cost of such administrations should not exceed 5% of the total allocation. Third party administration will allow for significant fund growth through private matching.
- This Program is meant to provide immediate assistance during reopening and is meant as a one-time appropriation pending the successful development of a long-term plan for administration and use of the Live Music Fund. It is imperative that existing funds be administered in a timely manner in order to provide needed stimulus to restarting Austin's live music economy. The Musician Reimbursement Program would serve as a starting point upon which industry stakeholders and city partners can build sustainable long-term programs that address industry development and investment through a lens of equity for all Austin musicians, venue owners and industry workers.
- The Gender Equity Working Group presents these recommendations Music Commission with the hope that the Live Music Fund will achieve its intended purpose of supporting Austin musicians, venues, and industry workers so that they may not only continue to live and work in a post-pandemic Austin, but to thrive as an essential workforce that serves Austin's robust economy.