



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
**CULTURAL
AFFAIRS**

M-AAA Houston CARES About Music Final Report

CITY OF HOUSTON
Musicians and Music Venues Economic Relief Program

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and City Council approved \$3 million for the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs Musicians and Venues Economic Relief Program. Funded through the Federal CARES ACT, the program will provide immediate and short-term assistance to the Houston music sector impacted economically due to COVID-19.

Applications have closed. Applicants will be notified of their status the week of December 7.



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OVERVIEW

The following document outlines a summary of data collected from the City of Houston Musicians and Music Venues Economic Relief Program applicant pool, as well as a listing of all recipients of the relief fund. In total, 36 music venues and 306 individual musicians received \$2,700,444 in CARES relief grants.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and City Council approved \$3 million for the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) for distribution through the City of Houston Musicians and Music Venues Economic Relief Program, commonly referred to as the Houston CARES About Music grant program. Funded through the Federal CARES Act, the program provided immediate, short-term assistance to the Houston music sector impacted economically due to COVID-19. (<https://houstoncaresaboutmusic.org/>).

The COVID-19 public health crisis has wreaked havoc on the creative economy comprised of a variety of industries and creative occupations. While still in the midst of this public health crisis, we know those in the gig economy such as music venues and musicians have experienced devastating losses. The sector has provided arts and cultural entertainment through digital media outlets providing a safe option for accessible, socially distanced programming, but the income generated through these engagements falls well short of the financial loss due to public health mandates closing venues and suspending in-person performances of all kinds.

MOCA engaged M-AAA in October 2020 to manage and distribute the City of Houston Musicians and Music Venues Economic Relief Program.

M-AAA facilitated one round of one-time non-matching relief funding which launched with an open call for applications November 4, 2020 through November 25, 2020. Both MOCA and M-AAA utilized social media, email and various state and local networks to draw attention to the opportunity. All grant materials were provided through a dedicated website (<https://houstoncaresaboutmusic.org/>) and made available in Spanish upon request. During the application period, M-AAA hosted two webinars, one for those representing music venues and a second for musicians because the expectations for those two types of applicants differed in a few ways. Both webinar recordings were available on the aforementioned grant website within

48 hours. M-AAA also held space on Zoom for upwards of 20 hours where applicants could drop-in to discuss their application and receive technical assistance. From November 25 - December 23, 2020, M-AAA verified applicant eligibility, made funding recommendations which were reviewed with MOCA, communicated the status of awards with applicants the week of December 7, 2020 and distributed funding by December 23, 2020.

The application structure was streamlined due to the short application period, but adhered to federal legal requirements written into the CARES Act and assessed applicant need.

Eligibility and Review Criteria

For the purposes of this program, applicants provided proof of residency or incorporation within the city limits of Houston which was verified through the online Council Member mapping tool (<https://www.houstontx.gov/council/whoismygm.html>) and then self-identified as one of two eligible applicant profiles:

1. a venue, nonprofit or for-profit, is one that derives 51% or more of its gross receipts from ticket sales for events that involve the performance of musicians
2. a musician is defined as an individual, at least 18 years old who creates music by playing an instrument, including vocals, as a profession in venues.

State-issued identification cards, proof of tax filings, a complete W9 Form, alongside website links to social media outlets or other sites that highlighted performance activity prior to the onset of COVID-19 were used to confirm that the applicant fit one of the two eligible applicant profiles.

The application utilized a needs-based assessment that prioritized support for:

- musicians that reside in or venues located in [Complete Communities](#),
- musicians that represent under-resourced populations, and/or
- applicants who were not able to access other CARES funding.

The program's objective was to be a resource for Houston musicians and venues working in any music genre to sustain their operations during and after the pandemic. With limited funding available and no end to the public health crisis in sight, significant investment with an eye toward broad distribution were guiding principles that pre-determined the maximum grant request amount for musicians as \$5,000. While venues with annual operating budgets of up to \$2 million were capped at \$50,000, and those with budgets more than \$2 million were eligible for up to \$100,000. The requested grant amount was justified by the applicant through required documentation of lost income or revenue through cancelled contracts for performances, residencies, or other events meant to take place between March 1, 2020 and December 31,

2020. This was complicated for musicians who often perform without formal contracts in place, but all were able to provide proof of lost income.

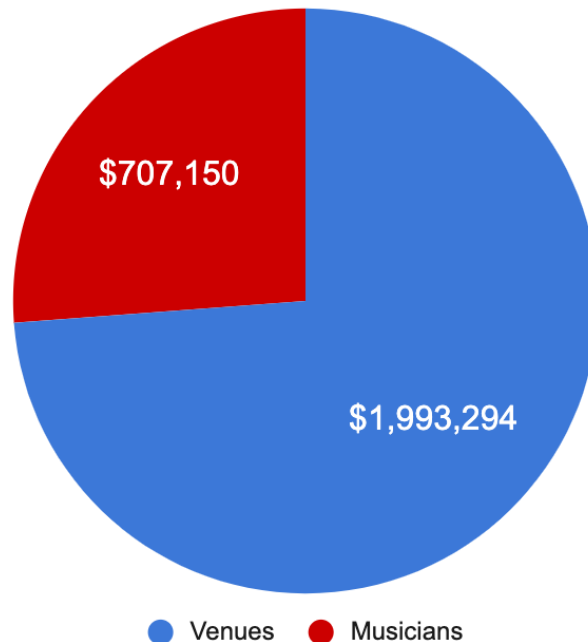
Houston CARES About Music Grant Highlights

| Houston CARES About Music | Musicians | Venues | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Total Application Pool | 832 | 68 | 900 |
| Eligible Applications | 464 | 54 | 518 |
| Ineligible Applications | 246 | 4 | 250 |
| Incomplete Applications | 122 | 10 | 132 |
| Not Recommended for Funding | 25 | 17 | 42 |
| Grants Awarded | 306 | 36 | 342 |
| \$ Distributed | \$707,150 | \$1,993,294 | \$2,700,444 |

Relief Grant Distribution

The call for applications to the Houston CARES About Music grant program was answered by 900 applicants. Once eligibility was discerned, the review of materials proceeded in earnest. The resulting 342 grants were awarded varying amounts based upon the needs assessment and the documentation provided by the applicant showing loss of income or revenue due to COVID-19.

Funding Distribution



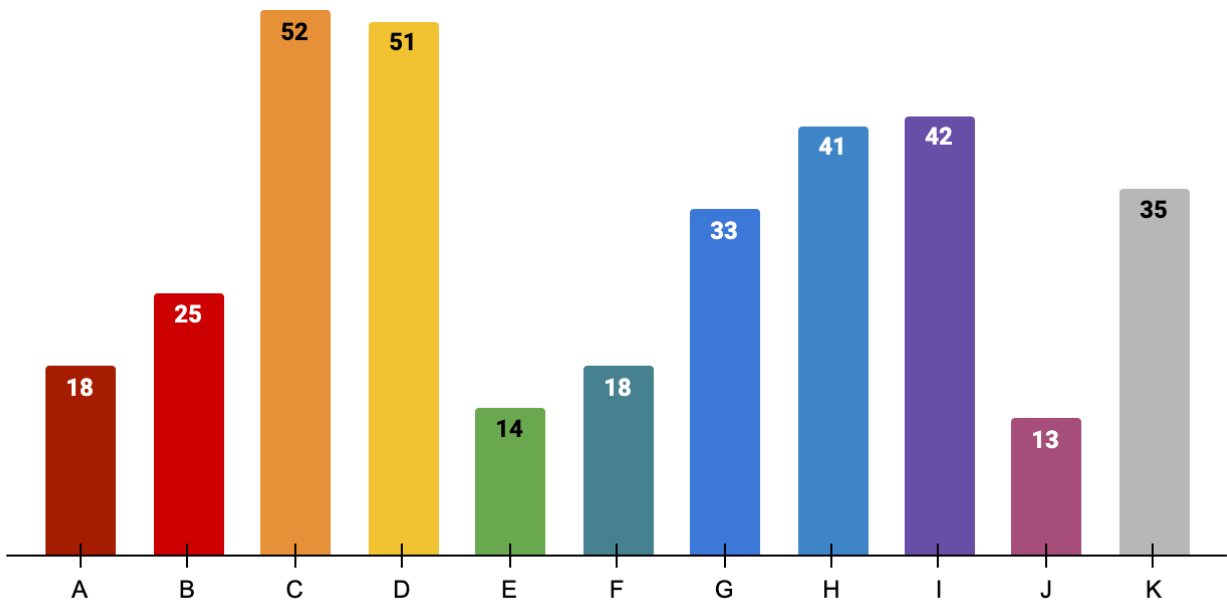
FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

342 Grants
Awarded in Total

\$707,150 to 306
Musicians

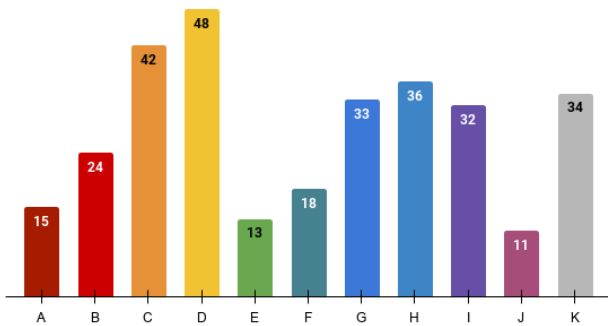
\$1,993,294 to 36
Venues

Total Grant Distribution Per City Council District

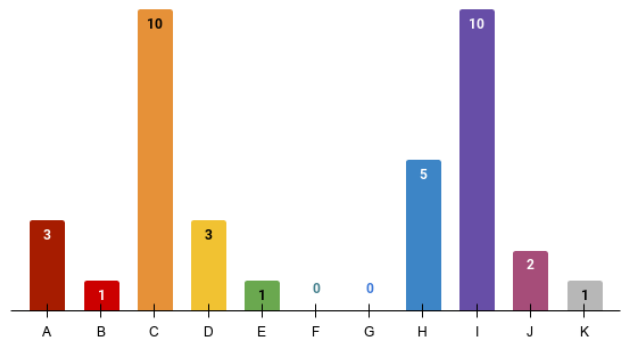


The Houston CARES About Music grant program received applications from and provided relief funding to every district in the City of Houston. Detailed lists of recipients from each district and their grant amounts are included with this report.

Musician Grants Per District



Venue Grants Per District



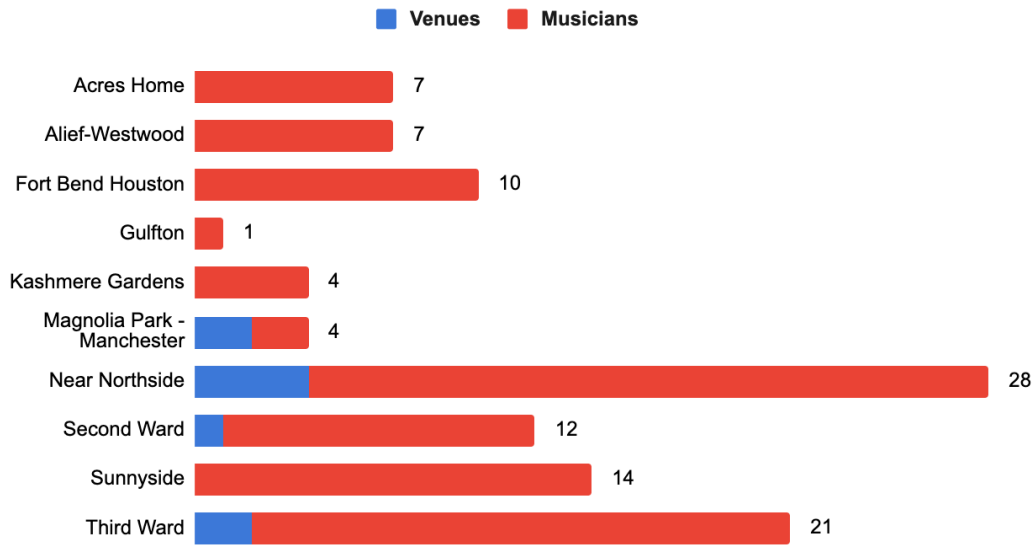
COMPLETE COMMUNITY FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

108 Grants
Awarded in Total

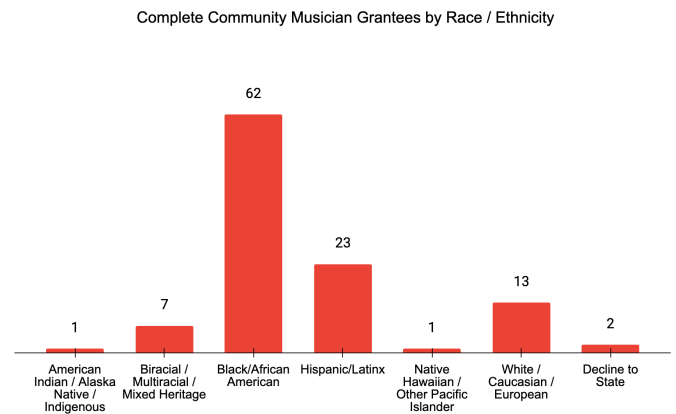
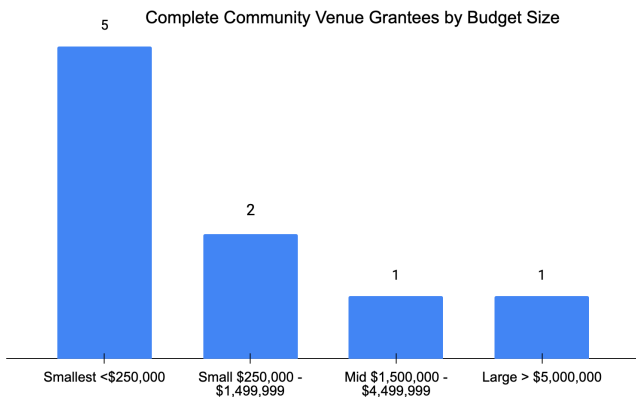
\$267,750 to 99
Musicians

\$385,294 to 9
Venues

Complete Community Grant Distribution

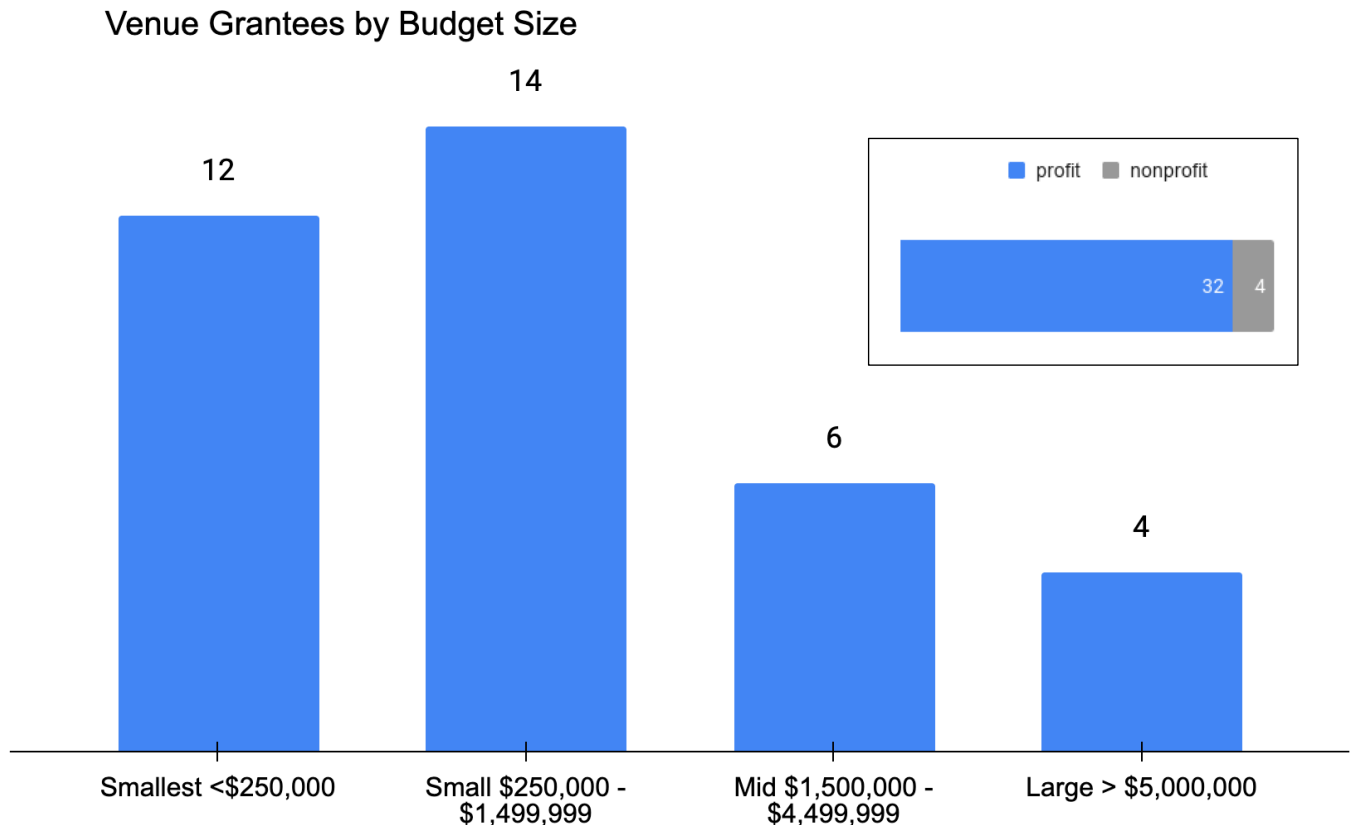


In 2019, Mayor Sylvester Turner expanded his Complete Communities initiative to include a total of ten neighborhoods. Houston CARES About Music grant program explicitly named Complete Communities as a priority for grant support. Ultimately, \$653,044 (31.6% of all grants, 24.2 % of all dollars) was distributed to those who reside in or maintain their venue in those neighborhoods.



VENUE FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

\$1,993,294 to 36 Venues

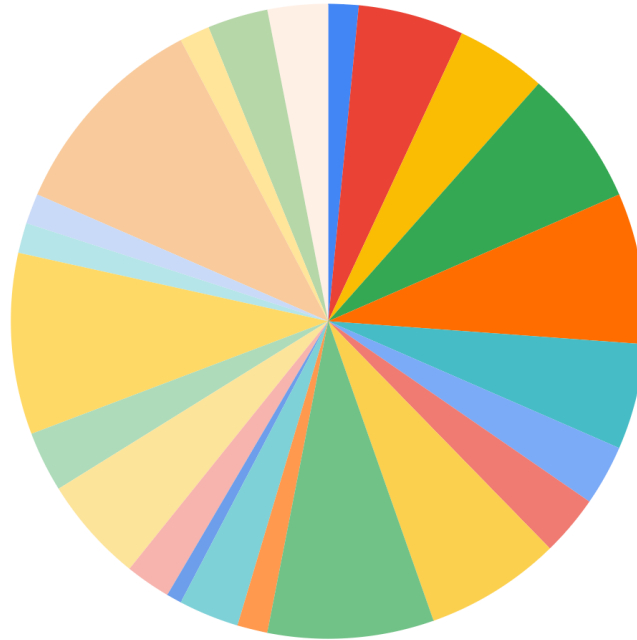


The Houston CARES About Music grant program supported both for profit and nonprofit music venues. There is no universal or standard definition of a music venue. A bar or restaurant may have a stage in the corner for open mic nights and think themselves a venue, while others are event halls available for rent and with that in mind think they too are venues. In an effort to zero in on those incorporated for the express purpose of presenting musicians, a clear indication of ticket sales was key in the decision-making process.

Venues were also asked a number of multiple-choice questions with respect to the access services they provide. Most provide translation services, offer sensory adjusted options for family-friendly events, and have wheel-chair accessible entry ways and bathrooms. While the Americans with Disabilities Act has been law for 30 years, there are still some areas where services are lacking, for instance wheel-chair accessible stages, but there is an obvious willingness to accommodate upon requested.

The kinds of music venues presented was not a pre-set factor for funding, but those selected present a wide array of musical genres. The following chart lists the various music styles followed by the number of venues that noted the genre as the primary. The majority of venues present more than one style of music.

Music Genres Presented by Venues



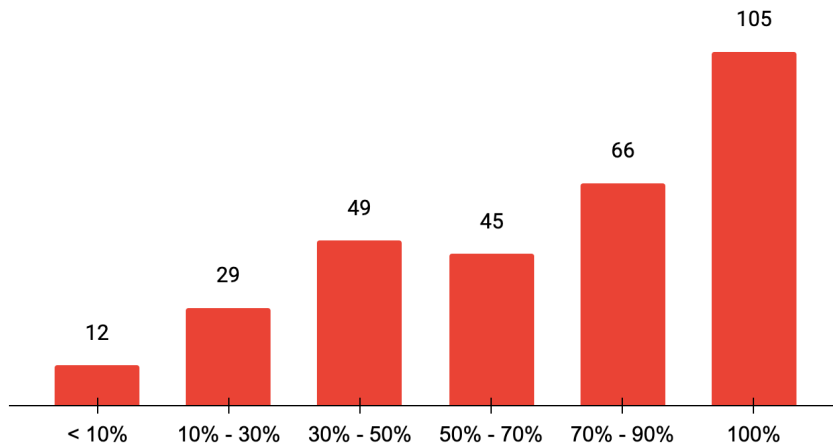
- Acapella: 2 ● Alternative: 7 ● Classical: 6 ● Country: 9 ● EDM: 10 ● Folk: 7 ● Funk/Soul: 4 ● Gospel: 4
- Hip Hop: 9 ● Jazz: 11 ● KPop: 2 ● Latin: 4 ● Metal: 1 ● Musical Theatre/Opera: 3 ● Pop: 7 ● Punk/Goth: 4
- R&B: 12 ● Rap: 2 ● Reggae: 2 ● Rock: 14 ● Spoken Word: 2 ● Tejano: 4 ● World: 4

MUSICIAN FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

\$707,150 to 306 Musicians

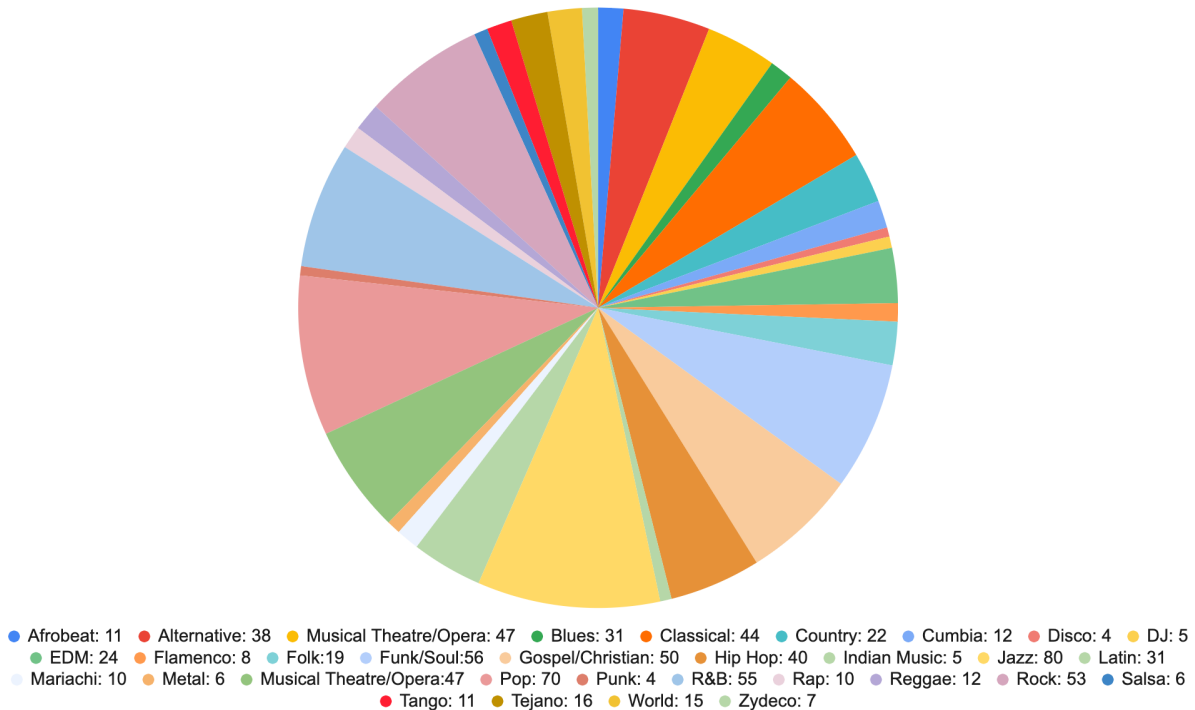
The Houston CARES About Music grant program was available to any individual at least 18 years of age at the time of application who creates music by playing an instrument, including vocals, as a profession in venues. This excluded teaching artists who were presumably less affected by venue closures due to COVID-19.

Musician Grantees % of income derived from the music industry in 2019



Pre-pandemic 34% of musician grantees relied solely on income from performing. They self-identified as primarily performing 32 different genres of music, with several noting more than one specialty.

Music Genres Performed By Musician Grantees



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

\$70.9M in lost income was reported by the 900 applicants to the Houston CARES about Music program during the period of March 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020.

\$39,708,008 in lost income was reported by the 342 grantees during that same time frame. That is an average loss in revenue of \$893,959 for each venue and an average loss of \$24,593 for each musician. Their applications further revealed that two thirds of grantees have seen more than 75% of their revenue diminish.

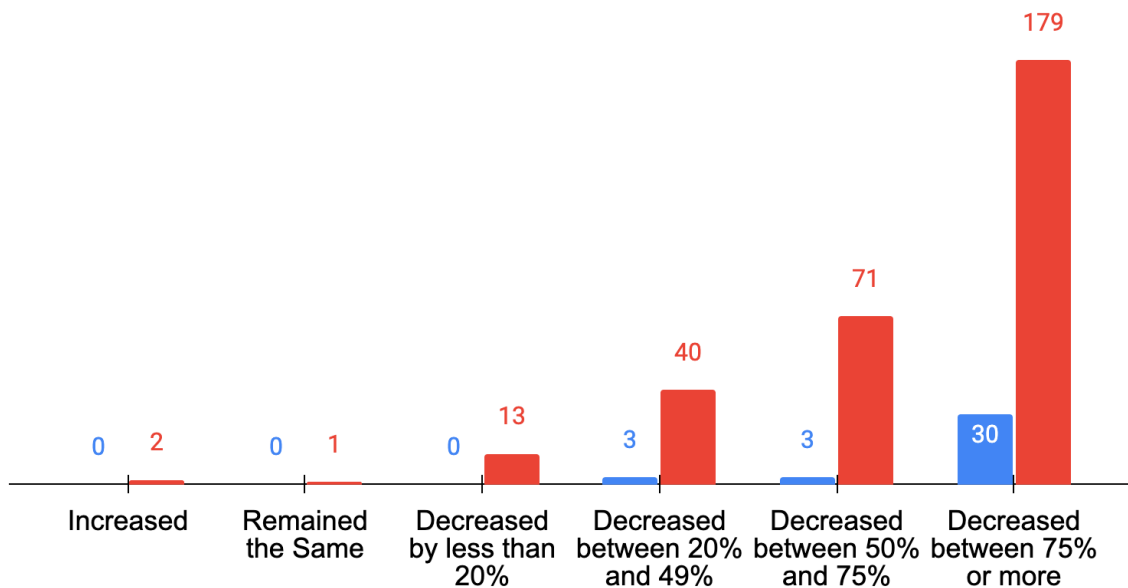
Reported Lost Income by Grantees

■ Venues ■ Musicians



Estimated Percentage of Lost Income between March 30, 2020 - December 31, 2020

■ Venue ■ Musician



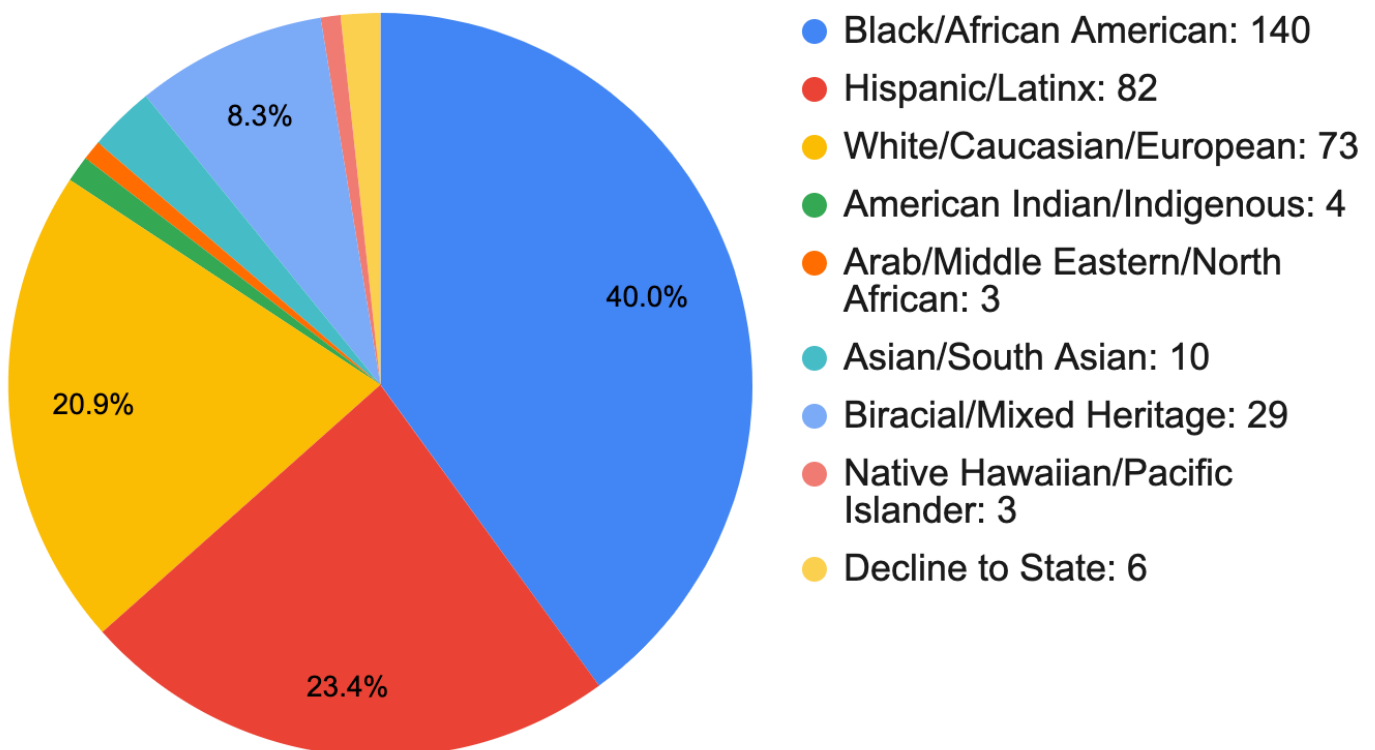
Those losses are staggering and undeniable given current circumstances. The Houston CARES About Music grant program explicitly stated in its grant criteria the prioritization of musicians who are part of under-resourced populations. The lack of access to resources due to systemic barriers requires strategic consideration and deliberate action. The application included a needs-based assessment tool of which applicants were made aware on the grant website at the time of application. While the demographic survey was optional, those factors and questions about access to other federal CARES funding were a significant part of the application rating scale and review process.

The demographics survey in the application revealed an array of information about those who received financial support. Forty percent of grant funds for musicians were awarded to those who identified wholly or in part as Black/African American, followed by 23.4% who identified as Hispanic/Latinx 23.4%. The following chart lists the various self-identifications provided in the survey followed by the number of grantees who identified accordingly.

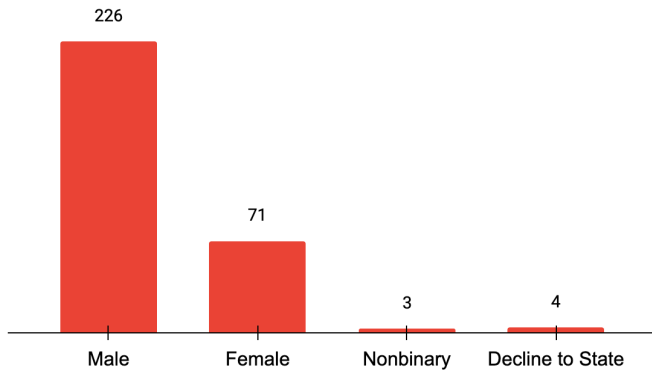
DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

The grantee pool includes at least one recipient that self-identified with every demographic included in the application survey. This was somewhat expected given of the diversity of the Houston population on the whole.

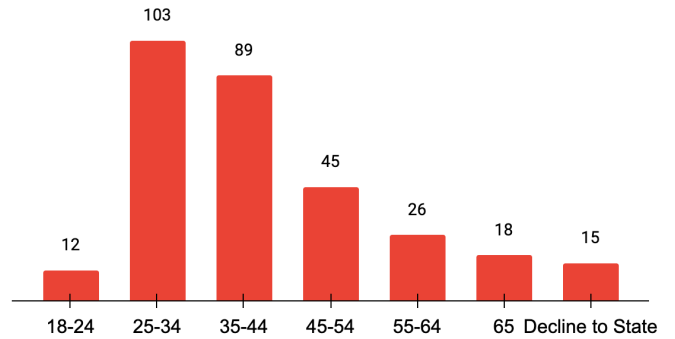
Musician Grantees by Ethnicity / Race



Musician Grantees by Gender



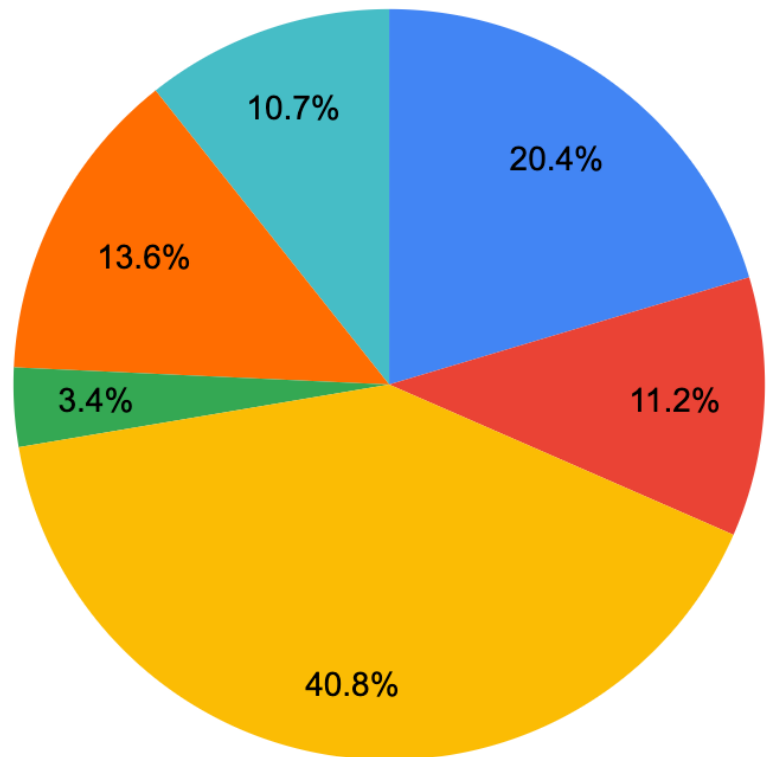
Musician Grantees by Age



The musician grantees gender and age profiles were not unexpected, but the number of grants to females as opposed to those awarded to men is curious because the needs assessment tool included women as an under-resourced population. A closer look at the application data reveals that only 21% of all applications eligible for consideration were from those who self-identified as women. The final grant distribution of 23% to women is then adequately reflective of the overall application pool, but not necessarily that of the priorities expressed in the grant program guidelines.

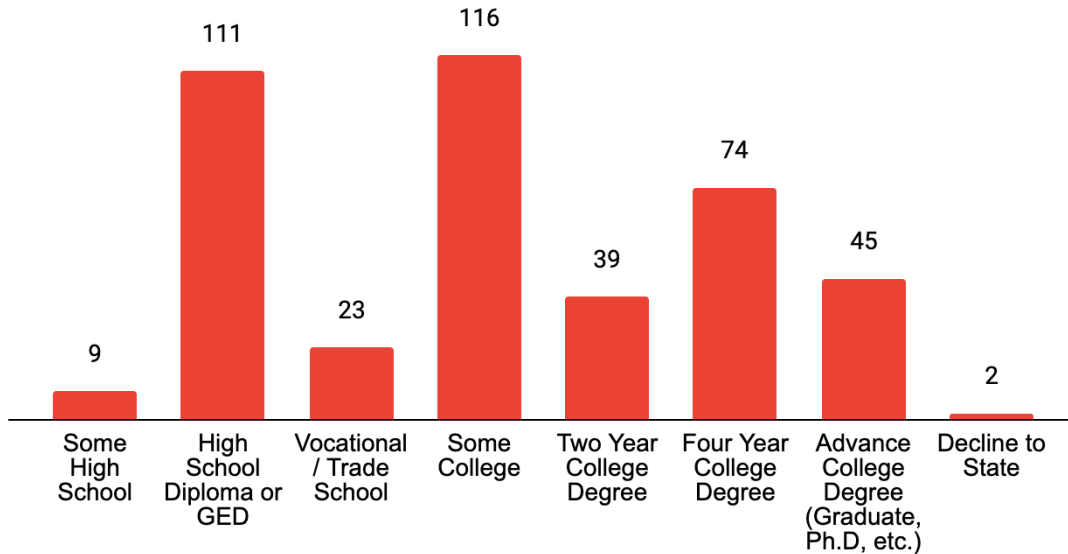
Other Musician Grantee Self-Identifications

- ESL: 42
- Caretaker: 23
- Parent / Guardian with child(ren): 84
- Veteran / Active Duty Military: 7
- LGBTQPIA: 28
- Disability: 22



The 306 recipients of The Houston CARES About Music grant program are multi-tasking, multi-talented and educated. Forty-two musicians speak at least two languages, more than a third of all musician grantees are parents with children or caretakers of others, and 45 have advanced academic degrees.

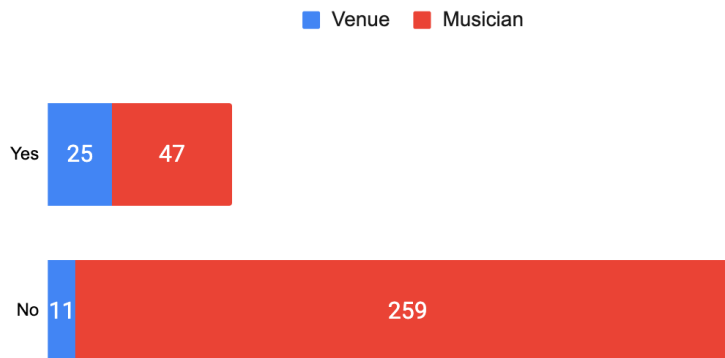
Musician Grantee Completed Education Level



Access to CARES Funding

The last of the three explicit priorities of The Houston CARES About Music grant program was access to other federal CARES relief funding. As perhaps was expected given the dire circumstances brought about by COVID-19, 85% of musicians and 31% of music venues reported no access to additional relief funding through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL).

Grantee access to other CARES Relief Funding



SUMMARY

The Houston CARES About Music grant program roughly allocated two-thirds of all grant funds to music venues and a third to musicians. This approach acknowledged the importance of a two-pronged response in a time of critical need. One response to reinforce the affected infrastructure and the second which is humanitarian at its core. Should additional funding become available there is a clear and present need to shore up the music industry by supporting those who work behind the scenes, e.g., front and back of house personnel who are also gig workers with a different, but necessary skillset that makes live performance safe for the musicians and magical for those in the house.

Those selected for the grant program have been exceedingly grateful for the support. At the time public announcements were made Fox 26 Houston interviewed vocalist Jane Vandiver on December 29, 2020, about the impact of receiving a Houston CARES about Music grant: <https://www.fox26houston.com/video/885073>
