



Dear Austin City Council Members,

As a collective group, we want to thank you for the current funding of \$1.5mil that has already been approved to help musicians through this unprecedented crisis. Sadly, these funds are not enough to help our city's music employers, venues, musicians, music workers, and music service providers survive the extended effects of COVID-19.

The RISE funding (for individuals) may provide some direct assistance to members of these groups, but the CLEAR and ANCHOR funds were designed to support the local businesses and service providers that are critical bridges to having businesses and jobs for people to come back to once the crisis has passed. **Below is our urgent ask for Council.**

The Austin Music community workers were the first to feel the crushing economic blow of SXSW's cancellation and will also be the last to see any income as our City opens up. Tours and festivals, the largest employment revenue streams, will not resume until well into 2021 - painting an especially bleak picture economically for music workers, as well as for physical and mental health outcomes, as potential income and employment losses push a year out.

Together we are requesting the following city council support:

- Maintain the staff recommendation levels for CLEAR funding for local business employers - not only the amount originally recommended by Staff, but also including the proposed \$35mil increase to Council on May 28th; and
- Inclusion of eligibility for music support service nonprofits inside of ANCHOR funding (see below).
- Support for \$6mil for Creative Sector Assistance and growth of Austin Musician Disaster Relief Fund (\$1.5mil) + Austin creative Space Disaster Relief Fund (\$1mil).

Critical CLEAR dollars for local businesses are being proposed for repurposing to programs for individuals like RISE. Without CLEAR dollars for monthly rent relief, **most employers of musicians and music workers will be out of business permanently.** The resulting loss of jobs and income will have a long term, detrimental cascading effect for housing, food and health insecurity for individuals.

Similarly, each of our music service provider organizations has experienced reductions in normal nonprofit fundraising streams - without access to disaster relief, we expect many of our organizations to reach funding limits and shutter. Closure or interruption of service to these at-risk recipients will further damage lives and future recovery prospects. In reviewing the language for organizations eligible for ANCHOR funds, the areas health and human services and arts and culture are specifically mentioned and all of our organizations fit firmly in one or both of these non-profit categories. Please include the nonprofit music organizations mentioned below inside of ANCHOR funding.

The following nonprofit music organizations should be included in ANCHOR funding: Austin Music Foundation, Austin Texas Musicians, Black Fret, EQ Austin, Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, HOME, Mosaic Sound, Red River Cultural District, The SIMS Foundation, TALA

We request that Council support the action outlined in the spending framework on 5/19, and support music nonprofits: increase CLEAR dollars for music employers; allow deployment of dollars from ANCHOR toward these music nonprofits, who are currently not included in the five categories identified in the ANCHOR eligibility criteria. We understand that need is greater than current federal funding, but our music employees, employers and service providers deserve recognition in creating and growing Austin's brand as the "Live Music Capital of the World."

We thank you for your consideration and for your service.

** In support of City Council COVID-19 disaster relief Resolutions No. 2020326-91; 20200423-040; 20200423-067; 20200507-023; 20200521-095; and 20200521-096.*

The Red River Cultural District [501(c)3] is a world-wide cultural tourism destination for authentic live music, entertainment, food and hospitality experiences in the heart of downtown Austin, Texas. Located between 6th and 12th streets, the district represents an association of over forty-seven local small businesses. The district's diverse programming regularly showcases both local and touring live music performances - seven days a week, showcasing Austin's live music brand between Rainey St and the University of Texas at Austin. Visitors to the district also experience over a dozen festivals annually, including not only SXSW Conference & Festivals, ACL Music Festival After-Shows, Creek Show, Levitation Fest, Oktoberfest + Hot Luck, but also to our annual district-grown music programs -Free Week and Hot Summer Nights. The District experience also provides excellent short-term & extended stay accommodations for all visiting guests and bands, culturally diverse dining experiences at restaurants + food trucks, as well as the promise of cold beers, excellent cocktails & good times for all.

FROM THE OFFICE OF

CODY ROSS COWAN

RED RIVER CULTURAL DISTRICT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PO BOX 16601 • AUSTIN, TX 78761