

Memphis Music Initiative
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Contact: Jen Prince
Cell: (870) 403-2094
Email: jen@memphisismusic.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Memphis Music Initiative COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a destructive financial impact on Memphis' creative economy; the black and brown communities Memphis Music Initiative (MMI) serves have been particularly hard hit. Musicians and creators have been forced to imagine new ways to create, teach, and share their art. Young people who are part of our arts ecosystem have been unable to connect, collaborate, and learn in person.

In response to this unprecedented challenge, MMI has established an Emergency Relief Fund to provide short-term, immediate relief for individual musicians and young people who are part of our extensive network of in-school, out-of-school, and community partnership programs. MMI will also be providing special emergency support to music nonprofits that serve youth, helping them do everything from improve their technical capabilities to retain staff during this challenging time.

Specifically, the Fund aims to provide support to Memphis creatives through:

- **Youth Grants:** The Fund will grant up to \$300 for the creation of new artwork pieces that respond to the COVID-19 crisis, recovery of funds lost due to cancelled bookings or loss of paid studio times, or a laptop or tablet for those who do not have one.
- **Individual Musician Grants:** Individual musicians may request up to \$1,000 to help relieve the economic burden of lost income due to cancelled events, gigs, lessons, or contracts. The Fund may also be used to cover expenses related to lost venue, vendor, or equipment deposits due to COVID-19-related cancellation of events.
- **Organizational Grants:** Current MMI grantee partners that are providing music engagement services to Memphis youth will receive support to modify their services and maintain the health of their organizations.

While this fund cannot reach everyone in need, MMI is grateful for the opportunity to provide aid to the artists and musicians who power our creative economy and the young people who are the torch bearers of Memphis' storied cultural heritage.

“Music and art aren’t merely entertainment in our communities; they are the tools we have relied upon for centuries to document our pain, express communal emotions, and heal our wounds,” said Amber Hamilton, MMI Executive Director. “During this crisis, it is more important than ever to support creatives and arts institutions. Supporting the creation of art is part of what is necessary to restore power to those who have been most harmed by the inequalities exacerbated by this crisis.”

Click [here](#) to view the Fund guidelines and access the link to the application.

MMI leverages targeted philanthropic investments, programmatic offerings, and strategic capacity building to strengthen youth, community arts, and music engagement activities for primarily black and Latino youth in communities across Memphis and the Mid-South. MMI invests in two ways: through direct programs that connect youth to high-quality in-school, after-school and summertime opportunities, and by providing funding and resources to advance organizations working with young people.

In addition to operating direct programs that expand access to music engagement opportunities for black and brown youth, MMI also supports the ecosystem of community organizations that work to extend music and arts engagement opportunities for black and brown youth. Their supports enhance the capability of nonprofit organizations to deliver programs and to secure funding/resources beyond those provided by MMI, so that youth always have access to high-quality music programming.

For more information on how we are impacting youth, through transformative music engagement, visit our website at <http://memphismusicinitiative.org/> or find us Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @mmusinitiative.