

Memphis Music Initiative
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Short-Term Impact of COVID-19 on Local Grassroots and Community Arts Organizations

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to disrupt Memphis-area businesses across every sector, local grassroots and nonprofit arts organizations are struggling to find ways to deliver programming, pay staff, and continue daily operations.

Memphis Music Initiative (MMI), a leading music engagement and youth development organization focused on creating equitable opportunities for black and brown youth, recently collected feedback from grassroots and community arts organizations about how the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is impacting their work. The organizations included in the report are all partners of MMI's Grantmaking and Capacity Building program, which provides funding and resources to advance organizations working with young people. These organizations employ roughly 100 people in contract, full-time, and part-time roles.

Specifically, MMI sought to determine the extent to which organization staffing, current programming, and funding have been affected. In addition, MMI collected information on partners' stated top challenges to navigating this crisis.

Key findings include:

- Grantee organizations report loss of revenue, general uncertainty, future planning, technology, and staffing as top concerns.
- Partners estimate a combined income loss of \$101,900 to \$138,900 due to loss of tuition, contracts, grants, earned revenue, and canceled fundraisers through early May.
- While no grantees have had to release full-time staff so far, four Executive Directors (ED) are unpaid; one is not taking a salary.
- Most grantees cite May 2020 as a turning point where they would have to seriously evaluate the viability of their organizations and make further salary, staffing, and budget cuts.
- All grantees have ceased regular programming and upcoming performances through at least the end of April or the first week of May.

The grantmaking and capacity building program has two channels: the Program Development Institute (PDI), which provides leadership and technical training and support for grassroots organizations and nonprofit leaders, and the Institute for Nonprofit Excellence (INE), which provides grants and intensive capacity building support for organizations to take the next steps on their journey to sustainability serving the youth arts sector in Memphis.

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.