

**From:** [Make Music Madison](#)  
**To:** [Room Tax Commission](#)  
**Subject:** How Room Tax Helps Make Music Madison Serve Our Community  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 7:43:43 AM

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Greetings, Commissioners,

At tonight's meeting of the Room Tax Commission you will review proposals for Organizations Receiving Room Tax Commission Allocations, which includes a request for Make Music Madison. Below are resources that provide a glimpse into the value Make Music Madison provides to the community and local economy.

1. [2025 Make Music Madison Annual Report](#)
2. [2025 Press about Make Music Madison](#)
3. [Global Choir Project - A Madison choir sang Three Little Birds alongside 10 other countries via livestream \(6:39\).](#)
4. [Video interview with Jamie Kember \(2:11\)](#)

Make Music Madison was started by the City of Madison in 2013 to provide a platform for musicians of all ages, experience levels, and musical tastes, and to bring live music to neighborhoods across the city. This year, despite the event falling during an extreme heat wave, **we presented 617 shows at 179 locations across the city, making us once again the largest chapter in North America, and likely one of the largest outside of France in the world.**

We rely on Room Tax funds to support our staff, our marketing initiatives to draw audiences from across the region to Madison, and basic costs including our chapter dues, insurance, and more. Below our signature are quotes from our recent survey to share with you the impact our event has on the community.

Please consider supporting the budget as proposed. We thank you for your time and consideration,

### **Board of Directors**

Make Music Madison. Inc  
(608) 571-7556  
PO Box 5186 | Madison, WI 53705  
[makemusicmadison.org](mailto:makemusicmadison.org)



### **2025 MMM Survey: What did you value most about Make Music Madison?**

"The fact it was part of global world music day, connecting us to people around the world. All the performers were great - from amateur to professional. Thanks to the artists, the hosts, the

organizers and the volunteers. MMM is an amazing experience."

"After hosting or performing in at least 6 events for the past 13 years, I guess I can say it is one of the highlights of my year and I can't think of doing anything else on the Summer Solstice."

"I loved how the events were so accessible and intimate and all around the city!"

"Expanding sense of local community."

"Celebration with music and culture is fundamental for the society"

"The chance to play music in my hometown in front of a passionate group of citizens."

"How community oriented it was. Being able to see neighbors and friends all over town made it truly unique and special."

"I listened to an artist I wouldn't have otherwise found. I've since reached out to her and can't wait to attend more gigs."

**From:** [Tyler Brunsell](#)  
**To:** [Room Tax Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 89719 | Brunsell, Tyler Written Comment  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 2:17:25 PM

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Dear Room Tax Committee,

We are all exposed to advertising. In many cases, we are subjected to personalized ads that speak to our behavioral patterns and as for the promoted entities who have data to tell them what type of ad would generate the best outcome for their business – we have become the product.

Developing and promoting tourism in Madison, Wisconsin currently looks like capitalizing on our city's dominant activities – playing or competing outdoors, eating, and studying if you count our campus. When I think about these activities, I think of who's able to access and be seen actively participating in what we'd classify as Madison's culture.

I find it hard to believe our neighbor who feels unwelcome due to the nature of our spaces such as downtown Madison – where we observe very limited opportunities for people of color to engage with others in inclusive public settings – to be visible to our marketing experts.

For example, as Destination Madison promotes our platinum-level biking city, I wonder who's missed and what that might say to someone scrolling through social media in Chicago, Nashville, Boston... cities where Arts and Culture hold a significant role in residents quality of life.

I also wonder what this says to our creative community.

The City of Madison's overall investment in the arts has been minimal, barely giving a fighting chance for our musicians, visual artists, and arts related businesses – especially those of color – to be part of our growing destination.

Reducing our ability to build upon what has been produced and what can be produced sounds similar to a longstanding arts export – asking our creative community to find another home for their talents and efforts.

Tourism, from a business perspective, is transactional and doesn't require heart. However, the expressions of all of our residents are what let tourists know there's a

piece of themselves represented here.

Do not cut funding – for how difficult it would be to reduce relatability barriers for our newcomers and deliver upon representation without Arts and Culture.

Thank you,  
Tyler Brunsell

**From:** [Karen Reece](#)  
**To:** [Room Tax Commission](#); [Schmiedicke, David](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Maintain or increase the arts allocation!  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:00:29 PM  
**Attachments:** [Greater Madison Music City Global Impact Summary.pdf](#)  
[20241219 AAW report for City of Madison\\_MAC COMBINED \(1\) \(1\).pdf](#)

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from [inkreece@gmail.com](mailto:inkreece@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

From: **Karen Reece** <[inkreece@gmail.com](mailto:inkreece@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2025 at 2:56 PM  
Subject: Maintain or increase the arts allocation!  
To: <[roomtaxcommissn@cityofmadison.com](mailto:roomtaxcommissn@cityofmadison.com)>  
Cc: Karin Wolf <[KWolf@cityofmadison.com](mailto:KWolf@cityofmadison.com)>

Hello commission members,

I will be speaking during public comment, but wanted to send some supporting materials. I'm attaching a list of public mentions related to Greater Madison Music City as well as a plan developed last year as part of the AAW program to market Madison's music scene through a podcast that builds national relationships. The AAW funding allowed our team to complete extensive market research and a deep dive into best practices for promoting cities as music destinations. This commission's investment in both Greater Madison Music City and the Artist At Work program has been instrumental in helping us break through the local bubble to being recognized on a regional, national, and even global scale.

This small amount of funding is absolutely crucial for making sure arts and culture, this critical component of what makes us a destination city, is at least maintained. Cutting this already small percentage of the entire room tax budget would be devastating for local artists and our very small staff dedicated to supporting this work.

I appreciate your understanding of the context and would be more than happy to have a conversation with any of you about this issue as you finalize your budget recommendations.

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Karen Reece, PhD (pronouns: she/her/they/them)  
President, Urban Community Arts Network, Ltd.  
<https://ucanmadison.org>  
Greater Madison Music City - [ourgmmc.org](http://ourgmmc.org)  
Business: 608-561-UCAN  
Cell: 608.213.0571

**IQ Magazine**, April 2025 - Dr. Karen Reece is mentioned in "How licensing bias is silencing black music events", magazine based in **London, UK**

<https://www.iqmagazine.com/2025/04/how-licensing-bias-silencing-black-music-events/>

**Leaders of Color Network** - Tyler selected as 2024-2025 Fellow for Wisconsin, Arts Midwest. This is a **national cohort**

<https://artslead.org/leaders/leaders-of-color-fellowship/2024nationalfellows/2024artsmidwestnational/>

**REMET Research Steering Committee**, 2024-present, Dr. Karen Reece was invited to serve on a steering committee by Black Lives in Music (<https://blim.org.uk>) based in **London, UK**.

**Delaware Arts Alliance**, July 2024 UCAN and GMMC is mentioned as a Benchmark in their CREATE Plan: A Growth and Recovery Plan for the Creative Economy and Cultural Tourism Sector in Delaware

<https://www.delawareartsalliance.org/creativeeconomy/#downloads-and-resources>

**This Must Be the Place:** How Music Can Make Your City Better by Shain Shapiro published in Sept 2023. Shain Shapiro is the founder of Sound Diplomacy and is known as the music cities expert around the world. GMMC is described in a chapter as a case study for how to build a music city with racial equity as a leading edge.

**2023 Music Cities Convention, Huntsville AL** - Rob Franklin and Karen Reece presented a workshop about GMMC for **global audience**

<https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/mcc-huntsville-schedule>

**Global Leaders Institute**, June 2023, Dr. Karen Reece was an invited guest speaker to discuss GMMC for the course called, "Understanding Music Ecosystem Policy" for the lesson on "Jobs, Tourism, Equity - Why Music Policy Matters". Approximately 30 **international students**

**Creative Washtenaw - Ann Arbor MI**, Write up on 1/2023 about how cities are investing in creative economies. GMMC is called out as an example

<https://creativewashtenaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Arts-Creative-Industries-National-Report-Spark.docx>

**Between the Waves Music Industry Conference**, June 2022 - Karen Reece and Rob Dz aka Rob Franklin present about "Building a Music City Focused on Racial Equity" describing GMMC

**Creative Economies Summit, Create Wisconsin**, April 2022 - Karen Reece and Ambre Dromgoole (Sound Diplomacy) present about Increasing Economic Opportunity for Artists of Color, **statewide audience**

<https://economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/articles/creative-economy-summit/>

**Amplify Music 2021** - Dr. Karen Reece was a panelist for the session called, “Who’s Music Industries in 2021?” during this global virtual conference.

<https://amplifymusic.org/event/am21-session-12/> released as podcast episode

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4xsUD3lmcTFTQYWINExUTB>

(<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2NnZeYYxxR3gQXKKwXjYo6>)

**7th Annual Madison Region Economic Development & Diversity Summit**, MadREP and Urban League of Greater Madison, October 2021 - Karen Reece and Rob Franklin lead workshop: The Impact of an Equitable Cultural Sector on Maintaining a Diverse Workforce, **Regional audience**

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#### **Local Audience – *Text in blue is related to Music Recovery Framework***

**The Cap Times – Jonás Tijerino, August 2025** Greater Madison Music City mentioned in “How hip-hop has grown in Madison in the face of opposition”

([https://captimes.com/entertainment/music/how-hip-hop-has-grown-in-madison-in-the-face-of-opposition/article\\_56ab29e8-9654-4008-a0bd-2ab9653912a9.html](https://captimes.com/entertainment/music/how-hip-hop-has-grown-in-madison-in-the-face-of-opposition/article_56ab29e8-9654-4008-a0bd-2ab9653912a9.html))

**Tone Madison – Scott Gordon, March 2025** Greater Madison Music City mentioned in “Madison and Dane County should fund the arts like it’s an emergency, because it is”

(<https://tonemadison.com/articles/madison-and-dane-county-should-fund-the-arts-like-its-an-emergency-because-it-is/>)

**Tone Madison – Scott Gordon & Christina Lieffring, November 2024** Dr. Karen Reece mentions work with Greater Madison Music City and Urban Community Arts Network, citing research and recommendations

(<https://tonemadison.com/articles/madisons-police-body-camera-report-didnt-disclose-a-researchers-connection-to-axon/>)

**Tone Madison – Scott Gordon, December 2022** Greater Madison Music City covered in “Lessons from a massive report on Madison music”

(<https://tonemadison.com/articles/lessons-from-a-massive-report-on-madison-music/>)

**Channel 3000 – Logan Rude, December 2022** Greater Madison Music City covered in “Report: Madison’s music scene primed for growth if given needed support”

([https://www.channel3000.com/news/local-news/report-madison-s-music-scene-primed-for-growth-if-needed-support/article\\_b4dbade7-69aa-57de-a0ec-3f7e52472efb.html](https://www.channel3000.com/news/local-news/report-madison-s-music-scene-primed-for-growth-if-needed-support/article_b4dbade7-69aa-57de-a0ec-3f7e52472efb.html))

**Madison365 – Isaac Trussoni, December 2022** Greater Madison Music City covered in “Music generates more than \$600 million in Dane County, study finds”

(<https://madison365.com/music-generates-more-than-600-million-in-dane-county-study-finds/>)

**Isthmus – Bob Koch, December 2022** Greater Madison Music City covered in “Ensuring equal opportunity in Madison’s music scene is goal of new report”  
(<https://isthmus.com/arts/music/increasing-equal-opportunity-in-madison-music-scene-GMMC/>)

**WORT 89.9FM 8 O’Clock Buzz – host Tony Castenada, December 2022** Greater Madison Music City discuss the Music Recovery Framework  
(<https://www.wortfm.org/greater-madison-music-city-report-presentation/>)

**Creative Economy Summit – Brandon Hofstedt, April 2022** Dr. Karen Reece and Ambre Dromgoole discuss Greater Madison Music City: Increasing Economic Opportunity for Artists of Color (<https://economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/articles/creative-economy-summit/>)

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See 2021 articles/mentions via “[UCAN/GMMC - Running News List \(In Progress\)](#)”



To: City of Madison Planning Division  
Attn: Karin Wolf

From: Karen Reece, President, Urban Community Arts Network  
December 19, 2024  
Re: 2024 Artist at Work contract

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The purpose for the work under this contract was to develop a marketing strategy for the Greater Madison Music City (GMMC) project to support a thriving equitable music scene in Madison. Promote diversity and inclusion within the music scene by elevating the work of underrepresented groups and genres. Make Music Madison and Urban Community Arts Network (UCAN) collaborated to produce a strategy that can be implemented starting in January 2025. We expect that Overture Center and Destination Madison will come on board for this collaboration in 2025 as well.

Tyler Brunsell, Creative Strategy Coordinator, for UCAN worked full time with Corey Whitmore from Make Music Madison. The team spent several weeks studying best practices for music tourism marketing across the country as well as notable efforts in cities known as music cities. As they developed this strategy, they focused on industry standards and trends for the type of media that would most likely get the best traction locally while attracting regional and national attention. The resulting plan outlines a long-term strategy to both build recognition of and create an external draw for music and arts opportunities in the Greater Madison area and to continue to build support and structure in our local music ecosystem. The two approaches depend on each other for success.

The strategy builds on conversations that started in GMMC's Tourism, Artists, Performance Equity workgroup. Prior to the start of this contract, the group produced a series of video interviews shared on social media featuring music ecosystem professionals sharing expert advice on a variety of topics. The video series can be found here:

<https://www.instagram.com/ourgmmc> The strategy also builds on community feedback collected over the past four years, research initiatives from UCAN conducted from 2016-2020, and the Greater Madison Music City Project Music Recovery Framework. Past work can be found here: <https://www.ucanmadison.org/advocacy/>

The attached report summarizes the strategy designed under this contract. Please contact us if you have any questions.



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## **The Music City Circuit**

Many grassroots organizations in Madison face barriers to accessing proven strategies for leveraging music to simultaneously enhance tourism, drive economic growth, and sustain a thriving, equitable local music scene. Greater Madison Music City (GMMC), a collective impact project led by Urban Community Arts Network (UCAN), is in a unique position to bridge this critical gap through non-profit and intercity collaborations.

Enabled by the Madison Arts Commission “Artists At Work” program, GMMC will employ “The Music City Circuit”; a podcast offering expert analysis and firsthand accounts of professionals from various music cities. “The Music City Circuit” will offer valuable insights to organizations, city planners, policymakers, musicians, and entrepreneurs, outlining strategies for building and navigating a music-enriched tourism destination.

Listeners and viewers will gain valuable knowledge on a range of subjects including:

- Strategies for leveraging music to boost tourism and drive economic development while supporting local musicians, with insights into both successes and challenges from real-world examples.
- Strategies for implementing effective cultural policies and initiatives.
- How music festivals can drive cultural transformation, strengthen local identity, and establish a city as a premier music destination.
- Insights into professional development for musicians, including grants, education, and collaborating with tourism and cultural entities to foster a thriving music scene.

Through proven strategies, success stories, and challenges, our podcast highlights music tourism’s role as a driver of urban transformation, offering valuable insights on how to shape our future as a music city while empowering our local musicians and music-related businesses.

## **Non-Profit and Intercity Collaborations**

Strategically working with Make Music Madison, Overture Center for The Arts, and Destination Madison, GMMC’s work surrounding Madison’s local music ecosystem will advance and foster collaboration through in-depth discussion, awareness and community engagement campaigns.

The roles of our partners include but are not limited to community connections and outreach, guest-tailored interview curation including identifying appropriate hosts, pairing strategies for local events and national conventions, and content gathering and preparation.

## **The Music City Circuit**

Greater Madison Music City, Make Music Madison

Artists At Work Program

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In addition to working with our partners, “The Music City Circuit” will be recorded at the Arts + Literature Laboratory, located in the heart of downtown Madison. This community-focused contemporary arts center serves as an ideal venue for our podcast.

“The Music City Circuit” aims to host four music city professionals from four locations across the nation. Milwaukee (WI), Austin (TX), Minneapolis (MN), and New Orleans (LA) were chosen by their previous music-related developments, such as Minneapolis fully staffing their newly implemented Arts and Cultural Affairs Office in 2023.

Our list of potential intercity collaborators, in this instance as podcast guests, include:

- Sarah Pancheri, CEO of Summerfest (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)
- Hugh Forrest, Co-President and Chief Programming Officer of SXSW and/or Jann Basket, Co-President and Chief Branding Officer of SXSW (Austin, TX)
- Ben Johnson, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Arts and Cultural Affairs Office
- Ethan Ellestad, Executive Director of Music & Culture Coalition of New Orleans and/or Nate Cameron, Jr., Board President of Music & Culture Coalition of New Orleans

Our intercity collaborators will be encouraged to share our conversations within their networks, increasing the reach of our aspirational music city.

### **Building and Navigating a Music-Enriched Tourism Destination**

For any content creator, connecting with their community is a top priority – and this remains true when the creator is an organization. During “The Music City Circuit” episode review process, multiple segments of each conversation will be exported as individual short-form videos. Combining content creation and community engagement, members of Madison’s local music ecosystem will be invited to watch and share their thoughts during a recording session separate from intercity collaborator interviews.

Initially starting with a one-on-one recording session, participating members of Madison’s local music ecosystem will be invited back at a later date for a recorded community roundtable discussion. In summary, along with four intercity collaborator interviews, GMMC will record and publish four collections of community reactions, and four community roundtable discussions to spark a much larger conversation within the podcast’s growing listener base.

Additionally, “The Music City Circuit” is dedicated to engaging its community by creating a space off-air that redefines the open mic experience in Madison. By incorporating beatmaking,

## The Music City Circuit

Greater Madison Music City, Make Music Madison

Artists At Work Program

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musician-to-musician collaboration and intentional adjustments to the venue environment, we aim to circumvent thematic inclusivity, inviting musicians of all genres to connect with our stage, participating partners, and each other on a quarterly basis.

Amidst recording sessions and open mic events, GMMC and its partners will work to create a list of active members of Madison's music ecosystem; offering a database for GMMC to continue sharing its work and progress as a collective impact project with the community.

### Target Audience

“The Music City Circuit” is a combination of the interview, music, society and culture podcast genres. Based on previous advertising results, GMMC’s audience is likely between the ages of 25 and 54, with a strong interest in music. While “The Music City Circuit” will need to discover its own core audience, GMMC and its partners have a following inclusive of local music enthusiasts, tourists and travelers, musicians and industry professionals, community advocates, entrepreneurs and small business owners, and urban planners and policy makers; each group mentioned fitting the ideal audience for this podcast.

Following Across Target Platforms (at the time of recording)				
Organization	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube
Greater Madison Music City	401	447	2	0
Urban Community Arts Network (GMMC Parent Org.)	2,547	621	21	9
Make Music Madison	4,200	1,628	31	21
Overture Center for the Arts	66,000	16,700	2,000	970
Destination Madison	24,000	46,900	4,000	446
<b>Total Following Across Target Platforms</b>			<b>170,944</b>	

## The Music City Circuit

Greater Madison Music City, Make Music Madison

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By engaging and converting just 3% of GMMC and its partners following across platforms, “The Music City Circuit” has the potential to attract over 5,000 podcast listeners/viewers; increasing GMMC’s total online following by over 400%.

### Platform Reasoning

- **Facebook:** To reach community groups, local organizations and local artists.
- **Instagram:** To share visually appealing content, including snippets from episodes.
- **LinkedIn:** To connect with professionals like urban planners, policymakers, and cultural leaders.
- **YouTube:** For video archiving and short-form content to reach a broader audience.

### Release Dates

- The third Tuesday of each month beginning February 2025.

### Podcast Measurables

- **Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn**

**Reach and engagement:** Measurable by platform (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) analytics, GMMC aims to reach 15,000 potential listeners/viewers per month, converting 5% of those reached into new listeners/viewers. (*750 total new listeners/viewers per month*)

**Audience retention:** GMMC aims to accrue at minimum 25% of our converted audience as followers, measurable by follower count at the end of the year across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. (*2,250 total new followers across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn by December 31, 2025*)

- **YouTube**

**Audience retention:** GMMC aims to accrue at minimum 12.5% of our converted audience as subscribers, measurable by subscriber count at the end of the year. (*1,125 total YouTube subscribers by December 31, 2025*)

- **Spotify and Apple Podcasts**

**Audience retention:** GMMC aims to accrue at minimum 12.5% of our converted

## The Music City Circuit

Greater Madison Music City, Make Music Madison

Artists At Work Program

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audience as followers, measurable by follower count at the end of the year. (1,125 total  
*Spotify, followers by December 31, 2025*)

### Open Mic Measurables

- **Attendance:** GMMC aims to host 50-100 music community members, 25 of which being local musicians ready to perform during our quarterly open mic. With a goal to increase this number by our final open mic, GMMC aims to have hosted 100+ local musicians by December 31, 2025.

### End Objective

Through proven strategies, success stories, and challenges, our podcast highlights music tourism's role as a driver of urban transformation, offering valuable insights on how to shape our future as a music city while empowering our local musicians and music-related businesses.

"The Music City Circuit" will inspire partnerships among government, business, and cultural sectors while amplifying underrepresented voices, showcasing their contributions to shaping Madison as a vibrant, music-enriched tourism destination.