

POSITION PROFILE

Executive Director

Music Columbus

Columbus, Ohio



About Music Columbus

Music Columbus cultivates a thriving, sustainable music ecosystem where people can prosper in the business of music while contributing to Columbus' overall cultural and economic growth. We are musicians, songwriters, music business professionals, educators, business and civic leaders from all walks of life brought together by our love of music. We are dedicated to the belief that through the support of music, we can create richer, happier, more vibrant lives and economy for the people of Columbus.

As the leading nonprofit organization championing the growth and sustainability of Central Ohio's music industry, Music Columbus equips musicians and music businesses with the tools they need to succeed. We also provide people access to live, local music to connect musicians with audiences and to make music a defining part of what makes Columbus a vibrant place to live and visit.

Pathway to Prosperity: Our Work

Since our founding as the Columbus Music Commission in 2016, our programs have steadily evolved to meet the needs of our community and strengthen Columbus' music and cultural ecosystem. Together, these initiatives form our Pathway to Prosperity: a connected framework that supports musicians and music professionals at every stage of their journey. By offering resources, mentorship, and hands-on experiences, we help individuals build sustainable careers in music while enriching the cultural and economic vitality of our region.

- **Music Monday:** Launched in 2018, Music Monday is a vibrant monthly series that brings together guests from across the music industry for education and conversation. Music Monday events have convened thousands of participants through both in-person gatherings and virtual events, creating welcoming and dynamic opportunities for networking, knowledge-sharing, and inspiration.
- **Gift of Music:** An instrument drive for local schools and organizations to increase equity in music education by getting instruments into the hands of students. Since 2019, more than 4,000 instruments have been distributed. In recognition of the program's value and success, the Columbus City Council declared August 2024 "Gift of Music Month."



- **Earn as You Learn:** In this eight-week paid summer internship, young people interested in music administration careers are immersed in recording studios, radio stations, event venues, and production companies, learning the skills and gaining professional experience. Since 2021, 66 young people—the next generation of music industry professionals—have participated.
- **The Unheard:** This new artist showcase series shines a spotlight on emerging local talent, giving artists the chance to gain exposure, build momentum, and grow their audience. Held at major venues across Columbus, the free, all-ages events create an accessible space for the community to discover new music while providing paid performance and free videography opportunities for participating artists. To date, more than 50 musicians have taken the stage, expanding their reach and strengthening Columbus’ vibrant live music scene.
- **Better Together Music Incubator:** Launched in 2023, the Better Together Music Incubator helps emerging Central Ohio musicians build sustainable careers through mentorship, workshops, free studio time, and networking opportunities. The five-month program culminates in a showcase performance that connects artists and audiences.
- **Resources & Support Services:** This suite of free tools and services supports local musicians’ well-being, professional development, and growth. We connect our community to health insurance options, social services support, mental healthcare resources, financial management tools, career development resources, and a performer directory.
- **Local Music Promotion Tools:** Free online tools like our Columbus Live Music Trail, Columbus Release Radar, and Columbus Music Map help connect local artists with audiences, increase visibility, and build community awareness of the local music ecosystem.
- **Greater Columbus Music Census:** This groundbreaking research initiative assessed the health, strengths, and challenges of our local music ecosystem to create a powerful snapshot of our community. Conducted in partnership with Sound Music Cities, Columbus was one of 15 participating cities nationwide, allowing for direct comparisons with other major American music cities. With the report released in 2024, the insights continue to shape our programs, advocacy, and strategic planning, ensuring we meet the needs of our diverse and growing music community.
- **Sound Investment Economic Impact Study:** Our recently released Sound Investment Economic Impact Study assessed the comprehensive economic impact and potential of our city’s music ecosystem. The study revealed that the local music sector generates over \$1.3 billion annually, supports nearly 10,000 jobs, and contributes millions in tax revenue to the city. These findings position music as both a cultural treasure and a powerful driver of economic growth, offering a roadmap for policies and investments that will strengthen Columbus’ creative economy for years to come.

Looking Ahead

As we approach our ten-year anniversary, Music Columbus celebrates a decade of growth and impact while looking toward an even bolder future of music in Central Ohio. In the years ahead, we will expand access, invest in emerging talent, and continue championing music as a driver of cultural and economic vitality. With the strength and creativity of our community, we will help write our city’s next chapter.

The Opportunity

Music Columbus seeks a visionary, operationally focused, and mission-driven leader to guide the organization through its next phase of growth and deepen its impact across the Columbus region. In partnership with a committed Board of Directors, the Executive Director (ED) will play a pivotal role to shape and refine the organization's mission, values, and vision, establish a clear direction for Music Columbus' next chapter; set and execute strategic and operational plans; and build both public awareness and financial support. They will lead a dedicated team of professionals who are committed to elevating the region's music community and will guide the organization to clarify its mission and chart a path toward greater cultural and economic impact.

The Executive Director will assume this role at a critical moment. Columbus is a city whose music ecosystem is vibrant and emerging artists, educators, businesses, and civic leaders are increasingly recognizing music's role in economic development, urban vitality, and cultural identity. At the same time, there are growing opportunities and challenges in supporting artists, engaging audiences, scaling programming, and strengthening the infrastructure (financial, operational, network) needed for sustainable growth. The successful candidate will be someone who can see ahead of emerging trends in the music industry and local creative economy and chart a course for Music Columbus to lead in those areas.

Music Columbus has had many successes over the past decade. There is also ample room to scale, expand, and deepen the organization's impact. The incoming ED will have the opportunity to:

- Expand and strengthen revenue streams (earned and contributed) to ensure financial sustainability.
- Deepen partnerships with local and regional stakeholders to increase reach and support such as arts institutions, local government, funders, and most importantly artists.
- Enhance program offerings, possibly expanding capacity of existing programs (internships, incubators, instrument access) and/or launching new ones in response to evolving community needs.
- Build internal capacity such as operations, staffing, communications, and evaluation to sustain, scale, and uphold high standards of accountability, inclusivity, and impact.
- Raise the profile of Music Columbus locally, regionally, and nationally as a hub for music business innovation, collaborative artistic activity, and equitable access to resources.

The ideal candidate will bring steadiness and strong operational expertise to a creative, entrepreneurial environment, with the ability to translate big ideas into sustainable systems. They will demonstrate proven leadership, management, and fundraising experience; foster a collaborative and inclusive culture; and be inspired by the opportunity to guide Music Columbus' sustainable growth. Together with staff, board, and community, the new ED will steward the next chapter of Music Columbus and elevate service to artists, expand opportunities across the music ecosystem, and ensure the organization remains a vital engine for creative, economic, and cultural growth in Columbus.

Key Position Functions

The Executive Director provides strategic leadership and day-to-day management of Music Columbus, reporting to the Board of Directors. The ED will:

- Work with the board and staff to clarify and articulate Music Columbus' purpose, values, and long-term vision.
- Develop and implement strategic and operational plans that expand the organization's impact on Columbus' music ecosystem.
- Lead a committed team of staff, contractors, and volunteers in advancing programming and strengthening organizational infrastructure.
- Manage daily operations, ensuring financial stability, operational efficiency, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Play a critical role in fundraising efforts, cultivating donors, and securing financial support to sustain and expand the organization's reach.
- Build strong partnerships with artists, audiences, educators, civic leaders, and community stakeholders to enhance the role of music in Columbus' cultural and economic vitality.

Key Position Responsibilities

Leadership and Management

- Oversee daily operations, ensuring alignment with Music Columbus' evolving mission and goals.
- Provide steady, collaborative leadership and direction to staff, fostering a culture of accountability, creativity, and inclusivity.
- Support staff and volunteers in program delivery, events, fundraising, and administration.
- Ensure compliance with financial, legal, and regulatory requirements.
- Manage Music Columbus' budget, financial health, and operational systems.
- Partner with the Board of Directors on governance, strategy, and resource development, building a strong and transparent relationship.

Strategic Vision

- Lead the process of clarifying and articulating Music Columbus' mission, values, and vision.
- Work with the board and staff to develop and implement a strategic plan that supports artists, the music ecosystem, and community engagement.
- Establish effective decision-making processes that enable Music Columbus to achieve both long-term goals and near-term objectives.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships, collaborations, and new programs that expand Music Columbus' impact.
- Build strong relationships with civic leaders, arts partners, and funders to position Music Columbus as a vital leader in the creative economy.

Board Engagement

- Keep the board informed about organizational opportunities, challenges, and needs.
- Partner with the board to strengthen governance practices and engage trustees in strategic decision-making and resource development.

Financial Management

- Ensure fiscal integrity through accurate budgeting, financial reporting, and compliance.
- Manage resources effectively, maintaining the organization in a strong financial position.
- Develop sustainable revenue strategies, balancing earned and contributed income.
- Provide financial transparency to the board and ensure policies and procedures support accountability.

Fundraising

- Cultivate relationships with funders, donors, and partners to expand resources for Music Columbus.
- Build and manage a portfolio of donors and prospects, including individual, corporate, and foundation supporters.
- Work with the board to expand contributed revenue.
- Oversee marketing and communications strategies that raise the profile of Music Columbus and increase visibility with donors, partners, and the community.

Public Relations and Outreach

- Serve as the primary spokesperson and ambassador for Music Columbus.
- Build relationships with artists, music professionals, businesses, community partners, and media to elevate the profile of Columbus' music ecosystem.
- Ensure effective communication strategies, including digital and social media, that reflect the organization's identity and engage the community.
- Represent Music Columbus at local, regional, and national forums, positioning the organization as a thought leader in music and creative economic development.

Team Leadership

- Support and guide staff and contractors, investing in their professional growth and effectiveness.
- Establish performance goals and ensure accountability across all levels of the organization.
- Foster a collaborative, inclusive, and creative work environment that values both innovation and operational excellence.



Qualifications

Competencies and Attributes for Success in the Position:

- Collaborates
- Cultivates innovation
- Organizational savvy
- Business insight
- Communicates effectively
- Financial acumen
- Interpersonal savvy
- Builds networks
- Plans and aligns
- Balances stakeholders
- Instills trust
- Drives vision and purpose
- Drives engagement

Required Qualifications:

- Strong nonprofit management and team management skills, with the ability to bring steadiness, structure, and accountability to a creative environment.
- Experience in strategic planning and implementation, with the ability to translate vision into actionable goals and measurable outcomes.
- Demonstrated success managing organizational or programmatic budgets of a similar size and scope to Music Columbus, with hands-on experience in budget preparation, analysis, decision-making, and reporting.
- Strong experience in fundraising including donor relations, corporate sponsorships, grants, and partnerships.
- Exemplary communication, public speaking, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholders such as artists, arts communities, funders, community leaders, and civic leaders.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with a Board of Directors, fostering strong governance and partnership.

Compensation:

Music Columbus is pleased to offer a competitive compensation and benefits package for this position. The target base salary is \$100,000-\$120,000, commensurate with experience, and with eligibility for a performance-based bonus.

Application Process

Benefactor Group is pleased to be assisting Music Columbus with this executive search. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. All applications are considered highly confidential. To be considered for this position, please submit your cover letter and resume in pdf format to:

<https://bit.ly/MusicColumbusEDApp>.

Please do not contact Music Columbus staff or board with questions or interest in the role. All inquiries about the position should be directed to Benefactor Group using the information below:

Benefactor Group Recruitment Team

HR@benefactorgroup.com

<http://www.benefactorgroup.com>

To learn more about Music Columbus, please visit: <https://musiccolumbus.com/>.

About Columbus, Ohio

With all the culture and amenities of a big city, Columbus remains a friendly, convenient, and affordable place to live. In addition, the city received a perfect score from the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index in 2022.

One of the fastest-growing cities in the United States, Columbus is positioned for incredible economic growth. Its traditional base is strong: it is the state capital, home of the country's third-largest public university, and headquarters for retail, banking, and insurance giants. The Wexner Medical Center at The Ohio State University and Nationwide Children's Hospital, both international leaders in research, make Columbus an emerging center for world-class healthcare.

Columbus is also a city that embraces arts and entertainment. Loyal audiences attend theater and music events, seek out art exhibitions across the city, and follow collegiate and professional sports. Music and arts festivals attract locals and visitors. A growing foodie scene includes fusion offerings from the city's diverse immigrant communities along with creative breweries, distilleries, and cafes.

Home to 1.3 million people with a median age of 24, Columbus is the 14th largest city in the country and the fastest-growing large city in the United States. Columbus' affordability index has sustained its growth. Ranked ninth most affordable city in the United States in 2022, Columbus is becoming an increasingly attractive place to live and work. The downtown area is in the midst of a building boom, the product of the city's focus on revitalizing its core.

Of all the places to build a career, you will find Columbus is second to none. With its world-class institutions, rich history—including a history of providing jazz music to the world from its vibrant African American neighborhoods in the 1930s and 1940s—booming economy, and affordable lifestyle, the city is an emerging center for innovation. Columbus blends modernity, history, and opportunity seamlessly.





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