

ALBERTA MUSIC ACTION PLAN

Amplify opportunities



Alberta Music Action Plan | Arts, Culture and Status of Women
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CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER	5
OPENING NOTES	6
BACKGROUND	8
ALBERTA'S MUSIC INDUSTRY	10
ABOUT THE PLAN	13
VISION	13
GOALS	14
SEVEN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	17
ACTIONS	18
PRIORITY 1	18
PRIORITY 2	18
PRIORITY 3	19
PRIORITY 4	19
PRIORITY 5	20
PRIORITY 6	21
PRIORITY 7	22
INITIAL STEPS	23
OBJECTIVES	24
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	27
THE PATH FORWARD	29
GLOSSARY	30

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER



Music is a powerful force that connects us and brings our stories to life. From big city stages to rural jam sessions, there's no shortage of incredible musical talent, top-notch producers and vibrant music opportunities throughout the province.

As Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, I am truly excited to build on the momentum that we have gained in the music sector thus far and explore new areas for growth with the Alberta Music Action Plan. Developed through robust stakeholder engagement, this strategy provides a path forward, positioning the music sector for immediate impact and long-term success.

Together, we are tuning up Alberta's music sector to hit all the right notes. Through innovative programming and strategic partnerships, Alberta's music sector will expand and forge new opportunities and meaningful connections in every corner of our province. Our government is committed to supporting and investing in creators and visionaries to bring more music business to Alberta and share the talent of Alberta's music sector with a world audience.

The music industry generates billions of dollars a year in Alberta, contributes more than \$2.5 billion to our provincial GDP and supports more than 23,000 jobs across the province. By building a strong foundation, the Alberta Music Action Plan will strengthen our music industry, diversify our economy and attract new investment, ultimately creating more jobs for Albertans.

Together, let's set the stage for the future of Alberta music.

A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to read 'Tanya Fir'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

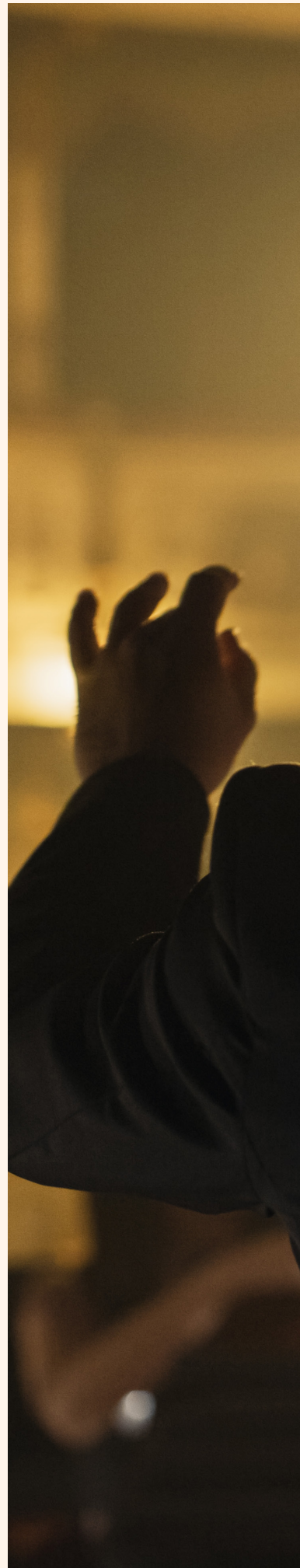
Tanya Fir

Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women

OPENING NOTES

**Alberta's music industry is humming.
It's time to amplify this opportunity.**

Alberta's music industry is poised to hit a high note. The Music Action Plan provides a roadmap for Alberta's government to seize this growth opportunity and amplify our music industry for immediate impact and long-term growth. The action plan sets the stage with priority directions and targeted actions based on industry recommendations, plugging into existing competitive advantages to position Alberta's music industry on centre stage.





BACKGROUND

MUSIC PUTS ALBERTA ON THE WORLD STAGE

From artists and instrumentalists to producers and technicians, the music industry is large and diverse. The industry supports more than 23,000 jobs in Alberta across live performances, sound recording and audio visual and interactive media.

Alberta's government has a sound track record of supporting the music industry. Since 2021, Alberta's government invested an average of \$14.8 million in grants per year to support sector growth. This includes supporting Alberta-made music, increasing market access, supporting venues like the National Music Centre and the Winspear Centre and expanding educational and training support. Grant funding supports various groups, including individual artists, non-profit organizations, sound recording agencies and music festivals.

But more can be done. Over the last several years, Alberta's government has worked with the music industry to chart a path for growth. Key relationships were built with organizations including West Anthem¹, a music sector organization led by a steering committee of seasoned professionals that aims to help stimulate the growth and sustainability of Alberta's music industry. Using proven strategies

tested in multiple international jurisdictions, ideas were introduced, including a 'music cities model' where Albertan communities have vibrant music scenes that support jobs, tourism and culture. In 2020, Alberta's government supported West Anthem in developing a music ecosystem study. Using detailed surveys, more than 3,000 music industry professionals, musicians and music fans based in the greater Edmonton and Calgary areas, contributed to West Anthem's final study.²

Following the music ecosystem study, work began to develop two strategic reports, one for Edmonton and one for Calgary, and a rural and small cities toolkit. These reports, which were released in May 2024³, outlined key drivers for Calgary and Edmonton and priority directions for the music sector, municipalities and the province while the small cities toolkit provided smaller communities with access to ideas, examples and links to resources to help grow local music scenes. The strategic report findings reinforce what we have heard in our many conversations with Alberta's music sector stakeholders.

Building on this input, Alberta's government developed an Alberta-specific action plan that reflects music as a pillar of a thriving creative industries sector.

¹ westanthem.com/

² West Anthem, (October 2020), *Music Ecosystem Study, Appendix 3: West Anthem Music Strategy Survey Report*, pg. 3–4.

³ West Anthem, (2024), *Music City Strategies*. westanthem.com/musiccitystrategies/



ALBERTA'S MUSIC INDUSTRY

The music industry in Alberta is a comprehensive network of artists, organizations and businesses, which includes:

1

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Live Music Performance includes all types of music and musicians, including opera, dance companies and dancers, musical theatre, orchestras, music groups and artists, music festivals and nightclubs and other smaller venues.

This includes approximately 4,800 musicians⁴; 83 companies and musical theatre groups⁵; 240 conductors, composers and arrangers⁶; 20 orchestras; 111 music festivals or festivals where music is a component; and more than 590 music venues.

⁴ Alberta ALIS. alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/occupations-in-alberta/occupation-profiles/instrumental-musician/

⁵ Theatre Alberta Member Organizations. theatrealberta.com/about/member-organizations/#Provincial

⁶ Hill Strategies (2023), *Over 18,000 professional artists in Alberta in 2021*. statsinsights.hillstrategies.com/p/over-18000-artists-in-alberta



2

SOUND RECORDING

Sound Recording includes all activities related to the creation of recorded music, including music composition, music publishing, distribution and digital music downloads and uploads.

Alberta is home to approximately 9,000 Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) members⁷ and 122 music businesses, including record labels, management and promotion.

⁷ West Anthem, (2024), *Music City Strategies*. westanthem.com/musiccitystrategies/



3

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Supporting organizations include radio broadcasters, music education programs, instrument and technology providers, funders and regulators. This includes 78 radio stations that focus on music, 529 music education organizations, 118 record and equipment stores and 30 music associations.

Collectively, Alberta's music industry generated an average of \$4.4 billion in total output since 2020 and contributed an average of \$2.5 billion in provincial GDP per year. The industry supports more than 23,000 jobs.⁸

⁸ Average data 2021-2023, Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0453-01 Culture and sport indicators by domain and sub-domain, by province and territory, industry perspective (x 1,000)



ABOUT THE PLAN

VISION

Accessibility, vibrancy and innovation are the key drivers of Alberta's music industry. With this action plan, Alberta's government will amplify the power of local music across Alberta and the world.

GOALS

In October 2024, Alberta's government met with industry stakeholders including artists, managers, music producers, festivals, promoters and venues. Stakeholders noted four key themes that should guide government's action in the music sector. These themes underpin the music action plan as measurable, achievable and tangible goals—providing a comprehensive framework with which to harmonize the work of the Action Plan with the music sector.

STRONG SECTOR

A robust music sector that includes the right talent, businesses, organizations and facilities, providing the needed foundation for sustained industry growth

The music sector encompasses people, networks, technology, resources and more. Multiple professionals and businesses—such as venues, promoters, producers and publishers—contribute to industry and support various aspects of the music sector.

If any part of the sector is out of tune with the needs of the industry, unintended barriers may arise that stagnate opportunities and growth. Actions and supports that leverage existing resources and strengths and create capacity will propel growth in Alberta's music industry, from art creation through to consumption.

Alberta's government will identify existing gaps and bridge them through policy, targeted programming and industry partnerships.

ENHANCE AWARENESS

Increased recognition and awareness of Alberta's unique strengths and resources in the music sector

Awareness is built upon visibility. Increasing visibility of Alberta's music industry, existing resources and competitive advantages drive growth in Alberta's music sector by encouraging investment, attracting and retaining talent and building audiences.

Alberta's government will take a leading role in amplifying awareness of industry resources, opportunities and advantages through actions such as:

- sharing existing resources (e.g., funding programs and skill development opportunities through stakeholder outreach, particularly among diverse or marginalized populations)
- improving communication with the local music industry
- promoting Alberta's competitive advantages

EXPAND ACCESS

Reduced red tape and barriers, streamlining industry growth for Alberta creators and organizations

Accessibility is defined in two contexts: first, the ease by which industry and artists can access markets, programming and support. Second, the opportunities for Albertans to engage and connect with our provincial music products in all their forms.

Navigation of the music industry and relevant supports can be convoluted, even for those working actively within the industry.⁹ Accessibility is impacted by the complexity of industry support, including funding programs.

Alberta's government will identify and eliminate barriers to funding, network development, market access and business growth to enable a stronger system of support and a business-friendly environment for Alberta's music industry and its professionals.

Additionally, Alberta's government will identify and expand on opportunities for Albertans to discover and engage with the music industry.

⁹ The City of Toronto's Music Office, (2022) *Toronto Music Strategy: Supporting and Growing the City's Music Sector*, pg. 24. toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/90a2-2022-2026EDCBrandedMusic-StrategyC5-test.pdf

FOSTER CONNECTION

A connected, cohesive sector that supports meaningful conversations, strategies and partnerships

Connection and communication contribute to stronger relationships and greater information sharing. The music industry is prone to fragmentation due, in part, to the sheer number of professionals involved, from creation to consumption. Fostering an environment that encourages regular and meaningful connections within the industry with policy makers, funders and other industries is essential to building an environment that can support and sustain growth.

Alberta's government will support connection through regular interaction with industry stakeholders, through both informal and formal channels, to realize the full potential of the music industry in Alberta.



SEVEN STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Alberta Music Action Plan is grounded in extensive stakeholder input. This includes industry feedback laid out by West Anthem in the development of the music ecosystem study and strategic reports, as well as feedback provided by the Minister-led sector roundtable in October 2024.

Seven strategic priorities set the baseline for the action plan. These priorities offer the greatest opportunity for government to plug into and amplify the music industry while aligning with existing resources, thereby ensuring Alberta's music sector is positioned for immediate and sustained growth.

These seven priorities include:

1. Improve communication

2. Maximize impact

3. Maintain funding

4. Explore under-utilized spaces

5. Leverage diversity

6. Forge connections

7. Foster development

ACTIONS

PRIORITY 1

Improve communication between industry, policy makers and funders

1.1 Establish an Alberta Music Commission with a mandate to lead the implementation of the provincial music action plan and function as a liaison between industry and government.

Timing: Short term (2026)

1.2 Create a Music Friendly program, delivered by the Alberta Music Commission, to assist Alberta municipalities to create policies that encourage successful local music scenes and help municipalities recognize the cultural and economic benefits of the music sector.

Timing: Medium term (2026–27)

PRIORITY 2

Maximize the economic impact of music entrepreneurs and businesses

2.1 Improve music industry data collection and sharing by establishing clear performance measures that allow Alberta's government to assess and communicate the impacts of the music industry to Albertans.

Timing: Short term (2026)

PRIORITY 3**| Maintain dedicated provincial funding**

3.1 Explore options to modernize how Alberta's government provides funding to the sector to ensure existing budget allocations and funding programs have the most impact possible.

Timing: Short term (2026)

PRIORITY 4**| Explore under-utilized spaces**

4.1 Explore how Alberta's government can facilitate the use of existing cost-efficient live performance and rehearsal spaces and reduce barriers that may restrict Albertan artists' access to these spaces.

Timing: Long term (2027–28)

4.2 Partner with communities and venue operators to create a central directory of venues accessible to music professionals, with contact information, specifications and booking details. Digital tools reduce barriers to the discoverability of venues and help artists find and book gigs, connect with promoters and venues and build their network.

Timing: Short term (2026)

4.3 Work with the National Music Centre (NMC) to create and refine existing organizational programming with the intent to further increase access to, and utilization of, existing NMC practice and performance spaces by Albertan artists.

Timing: Short term (2026)



PRIORITY 5

Leverage the strength of representation in the music industry

5.1 Work with ministry partners to explore how access to the Women in Technical and Applied Arts Scholarship Program can be increased. The program supports women pursuing post-secondary education in technical roles within cultural industries, who are often underrepresented in these fields.

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Timing: Short term (2026)

5.2 Build relationships with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and the federal Indigenous Music Office to discuss collaboration and partnership opportunities to advance Indigenous creators in Alberta's music industry with the intent to eliminate barriers for Indigenous creators, such as accessibility to funding, marketing and geographic restrictions.

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Timing: Short term (2026)

5.3 Build relationships with Women in Music Canada to create awareness of collaborative opportunities to advance women's participation in Alberta's music industry and advance the careers of Alberta's female music professionals nationally and internationally.

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Timing: Short term (2026)

PRIORITY 6

| Forge connections between music and other industries

6.1 To support the intersection of film and music, research the development of policy that recognizes music’s integral role in film and television production and encourages the use of Alberta musicians and recording facilities.

Options could include leveraging existing incentives to promote the use of Alberta music labour, Albertan-created intellectual property or facilities.

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Timing: Long term (2027–28)

6.2 Explore adding a sub-stream within the existing Alberta Made Production Grant to support the production of high-quality music videos by Alberta production companies for Alberta artists. Music video production shares skill sets that overlap with film production and provides opportunities for Alberta crew and talent to gain hands-on experience.

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Timing: Medium term (2026–27)

6.3 Explore tools or initiatives that can expand opportunities for Alberta creators to connect with potential “sync” opportunities. Sync opportunities create revenue for artists and build artist discoverability with new audiences.

—
Timing: Long term (2027–28)

6.4 Increase the visibility of music businesses in Alberta, and work with sector partners to create a music business directory that provides a one-stop shop for accessing music-related businesses, professionals, contractors and other service providers in Alberta.

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Timing: Medium term (2026–27)

6.5 Work with relevant partners to create opportunities that leverage music as a driver of tourism and cultural engagement, creating and promoting travel experiences driven by a desire to attend a music event.

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Timing: Medium term (2026–27)

PRIORITY 7**| Foster artist development**

7.1 Working within existing budget allocations, research funding opportunities for music sector initiatives that increase the long-term career viability of Alberta artists, producers and technical professions.

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Timing: Short term (2026)

7.2 Leverage government funding to major cultural events, such as the Canadian Country Music Awards and JUNOS, to create legacy-building opportunities that leave lasting benefits for Alberta's artists and music community.

—
Timing: Medium term (2026–27)



ALBERTA MUSIC COMMISSION

INITIAL STEPS

Alberta is ready to amplify opportunities for artists, creators and producers.

The Alberta Music Commission will champion the provincial music industry by connecting Alberta artists, producers and creators with the world—putting Alberta on the centre stage.

The Alberta Music Commission will bring together and share resources for the overall betterment of the Alberta music industry, eliminating gaps that may inhibit progress. The Commission will amplify the economic growth and cultural impact of Alberta's artists, creators and producers through the goals to:

- Attract
- Showcase
- Celebrate

The Alberta Music Commission is built on the model and framework of the existing Alberta Film Commission, which has proven success for more than two decades in its support of the Alberta film and television industry. This approach encourages a creative cluster effect to attract investment and talent from multiple creative industries.

VISION

Amplifying Alberta's music industry, the Alberta Music Commission sets the stage for a vibrant music sector that cultivates creativity and opportunity for all voices and builds on innovation and connection.

MANDATE

The Alberta Music Commission supports economic growth opportunities within the Alberta music industry by plugging into opportunities for artists, creators and producers.



OBJECTIVES

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

- Oversee the implementation, execution and monitoring of a provincial music action plan.
- Promote collaboration and build partnerships, both within the industry and between government and the industry.
- Inform government and senior management about industry business issues.
- Co-ordinate and oversee provincial resources and websites.

TALENT AND INVESTMENT RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

- Develop an annual industry workplan to improve the business climate, increase employment, attract new investment and develop and strengthen partnerships with other agencies.
- Elevate and showcase local talent.
- Lead inter- and intra-industry connection and bridge communication gaps within the music industry and across other industries.

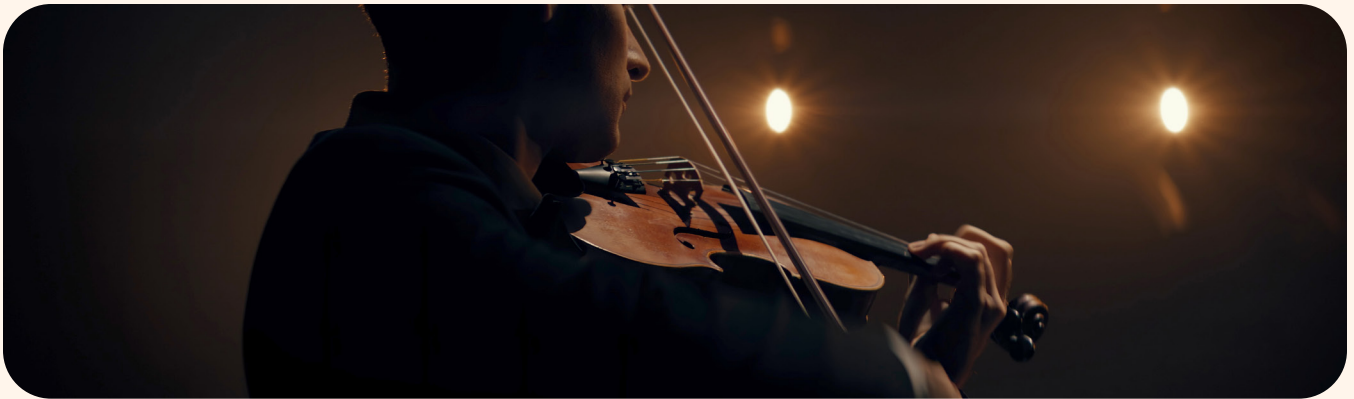
SHOWCASE ALBERTA

- Represent the industry and the province on inter-governmental teams, external industry associations and senior level public/private advisory committees and boards.
- Recommend, plan and co-ordinate provincial participation at domestic and international festivals, trade shows, conferences and conventions, as well as promote the province's economic development and culture services to national and international businesses and delegations.

CELEBRATE SUCCESSSES AND IMPACTS

- Enhance positioning and branding of Alberta and its music industry.
- Establish relevant and prompt performance metrics to track industry impacts.
- Highlight the music industry's role in Alberta's economic growth.





CROSS-GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA COLLABORATION

While the Alberta Music Commission will take the lead in implementing the Alberta Music Action Plan, several ministries will be involved to support the sector.

The Commission will act as a conduit across government departments to harmonize provincial efforts to grow the music sector and ensure sector partners are meaningfully engaged in the execution of actions in the music sector.

Specific opportunities for collaboration and alignment include, but are not limited to:

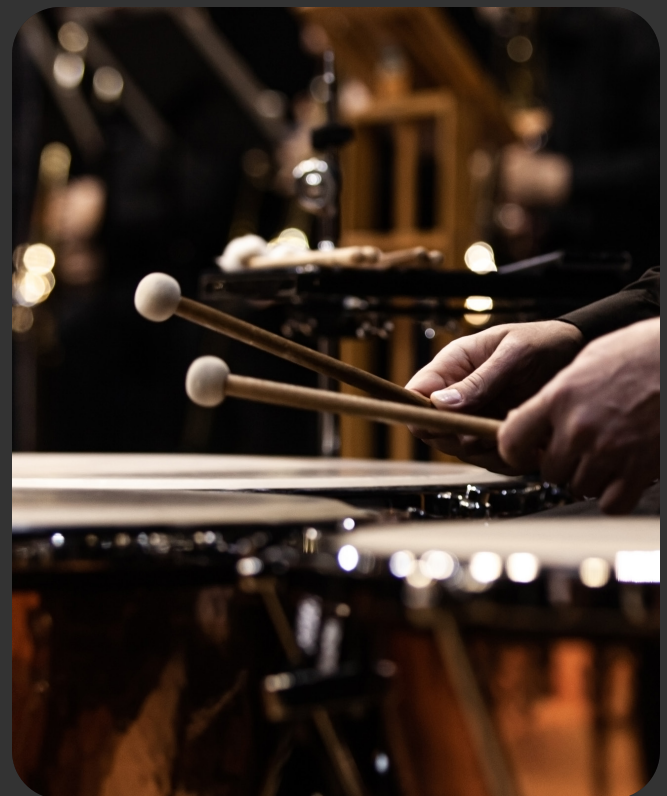
- **Indigenous Relations:** Implementation of all actions within the plan will strive to recognize the richness of connection between Indigenous cultures and the arts and include considerations specifically geared towards Indigenous creators.
- **Advanced Education:** When exploring opportunities to enhance long term career viability and foster ongoing artist development, considerations will be given to the unique and critical role of Alberta's publicly funded post-secondary institutions, provincial student aid programs and private career colleges. Specific attention will be given to explore how each of these areas can be effectively leveraged towards mutual objectives in both the music and post-secondary sectors in the province.
- **Education and Childcare:** In exploring opportunities to foster artists' development, there are existing programs, such as the Dual Credit program, that can be leveraged, showcased and potentially expanded to enhance Alberta's music sector.
- **Municipal Affairs:** Recognizing the critical role that Alberta's municipalities will play in the overall success of Alberta's music sector, thoughtful and ongoing consultation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will be key to fostering productive partnerships with municipalities where music businesses and Albertan artists stand to benefit.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION



Alberta's government, through the Alberta Music Commission, is committed to monitoring and reporting on the progress of the action plan against outcomes, including:

- Increased economic impact of the music industry in Alberta.
- Increased strategic partnerships that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the music industry.
- Greater awareness of industry supports by diverse communities.
- Reduced red tape and barriers that may impact stakeholder interactions.
- Increased music tourism experiences.





THE PATH FORWARD

A vibrant music sector generates significant value, including jobs, tourism development and artistic growth.¹⁰

Alberta's government plays a crucial role in supporting the province's music industry through existing policies and programs. It is clear there is more that can be done to amplify Alberta's thriving music industry.

The actions outlined in this plan will provide a clear roadmap to cultivating measurable impacts by using Alberta's natural strengths, industry partnerships and community connections.

By building on the excellent work and recommendations of valued industry partners, the plan will enhance awareness, expand access, strengthen and foster connections and set the stage for long-term amplification of Alberta's music industry.

Alberta is ready to plug in and AMPLIFY.

¹⁰ Music Canada, (2015), *Live Music Measures Up: An Economic Impact Analysis of Live Music in Ontario*. musiccanada.com/resources/research/live-music-measures-up/

GLOSSARY

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

A measure of the economic production that takes place within the geographical boundaries of Canada.

INDIGENOUS MUSIC OFFICE

A national organization designed to support and develop Indigenous musicians.

NATIONAL MUSIC CENTRE (NMC)

A Calgary-based non-profit organization with a mission to give Canada a place that amplifies the love, sharing and understanding of music.

OUTPUT

The products and services created by an industry.

RESONANT ENERGIES MUSIC CITY STRATEGIES

Two reports, one for Edmonton and one for Calgary, released in May 2024 outlining strategies for music-friendly policies.

RURAL AND SMALL CITY MUSIC TOOLKIT

A website organized into eight broad areas with music strategies specifically targeted to rural and small cities in Alberta.





SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS AND MUSIC PUBLISHERS OF CANADA (SOCAN)

A non-profit member service organization that represents the rights of music creators and publishers. SOCAN collects license fees and distributes royalties to Canadian music composers, authors and publishers.

SYNC (OR SYNCHRONIZATION)

Refers to the alignment of sound and image in film. Any time a song is used, royalties are paid to a rights owner, such as a music label or the songwriter.

WEST ANTHEM

A music sector organization that aims to help stimulate the growth and sustainability of Alberta's music industry. West Anthem was originally branded as Alberta Music Cities.

WOMEN IN MUSIC CANADA (WIMC)

A registered non-profit organization and one of the largest music industry associations in Canada. WIMC provides programming, community building and online resources to strengthen the social-economic balance of the music industry.

WOMEN IN TECHNICAL AND APPLIED ARTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

A Government of Alberta funded program that supports women pursuing post-secondary education in technical roles within cultural industries, who are often underrepresented in these fields.

Alberta 

 ALBERTA
MUSIC
COMMISSION