

# A Letter to the Austin Music Industry

**PROSPER**  
When Artists Prosper, Culture Thrives



Austin's reputation as the "Live Music Capital of the World" masks a difficult truth: the artists driving the city's culture are struggling **often invisibly, and dangerously**.

## The numbers speak for themselves:



**38% of local musicians report housing is unaffordable, and nearly 1 in 3 are considering leaving Austin** within the next three years due to the rising cost of living. (2024 Greater Austin Music Census)



Austin's **music economy generates hundreds of millions annually** with events like SXSW and ACL injecting nearly **\$880 million combined in 2023** yet most of that revenue doesn't reach the artists whose labor makes it possible.



**Live performance pay has remained stagnant** for over 40 years; most artists still make **around \$100 per gig**, while rent and basic living expenses have skyrocketed. (KUT, 2023)



Roughly **3% of the nearly \$880 million generated in 2023 flowed directly to the musicians** whose labor created the draw.



**More than 20% of Austin's working musicians live below the federal poverty line.** (2024 Austin Music Census)



The emotional toll is devastating. **Suicide rates among musicians are higher than average**, driven by financial instability, isolation, and lack of mental health support.



**Half of musicians qualify for federal housing assistance.**

**THESE AREN'T  
ISOLATED STATISTICS.  
THEY ARE WARNINGS.**

They are stories of people storytellers, culture-bearers, dreamers being systemically undervalued in a city and industry that thrives on their creative output.

## IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THAT

Prosper XO isn't just building a platform. We are building a movement rooted in equity, transparency, and artist-first values. Our mission is to create a world where **artists are seen, heard, understood and paid**.

## WE BELIEVE:

**Artists deserve ownership** of their data and their destiny.

**Revenue must flow to creators**, not just platforms, agencies, and middlemen.

**Opportunity should be accessible**, not gate kept by industry insiders.

**Connection to brands and fans should be intentional**, not exploitative.

**Mental health, community, and sustainability** must be central to the future of music.

Prosper XO exists because the status quo is no longer acceptable. Because "culture" without care is just exploitation. Because when artists prosper, culture thrives and communities thrive with them.

Love, Prosper XO  
Lauren Bruno  
Founder

**LET'S STOP ROMANTICIZING THE STARVING ARTIST.  
LET'S BUILD A NEW STANDARD. LET'S MAKE MUSIC SUSTAINABLE.**