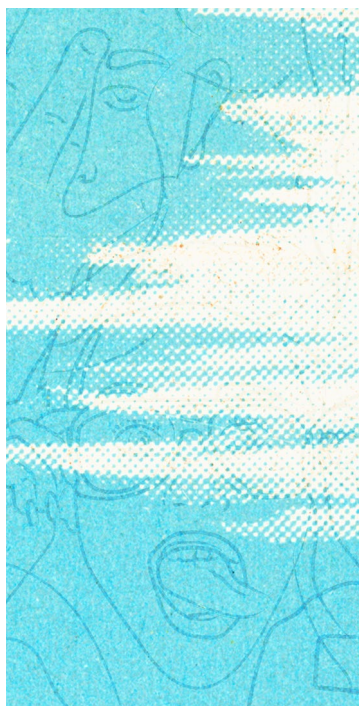
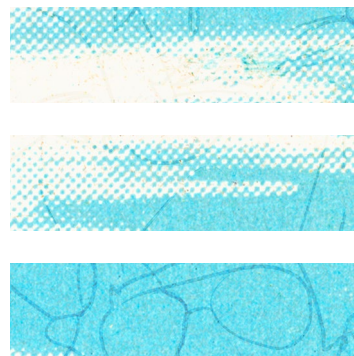


THE SOUND OF SUPPORT

Exploring the
Music Community's
Caregiver Needs

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This report was commissioned by Women in Music Canada and Music Publishers Canada and made possible with the support of Ontario Creates, an agency of the Government of Ontario, Creative BC, and the Province of British Columbia. Women in Music Canada and Music Publishers Canada extend their sincere thanks to all those in the music industry who contributed their time and insights to this needs assessment.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Ontario Creates, the Government of Ontario, Creative BC, or the Government of British Columbia. The governments of Ontario and British Columbia are in no way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.

INTRODUCTION

In an industry with a reputation for gig work, late nights, and extensive touring, it can be challenging for those with caregiver responsibilities to survive and thrive in music sector careers. On the employer side, companies risk losing the skills of experienced and talented workers if they do not understand and adapt their workplaces to accommodate caregiver needs.

Women in Music Canada and Music Publishers Canada, with the support of Ontario Creates and Creative BC, and working with the consulting firm Castledale, commissioned this needs assessment to explore and identify the specific requirements of the music community related to the demands of caregiving.

The study's objective is to explore the questions: "What are examples of current support systems and how effective are they; where are there gaps in services and resources; and what are some suggestions for industry-specific caregiver support?" The longer-term goal is to create a call to action to the music community at large to work together to raise awareness of the issue, promote access to existing resources, adopt and share best practices, and develop new support where gaps exist.

This study defines 'caregivers' as individuals who look after children, aging adults, or those in need of personal or primary care, on an unpaid basis.

The music sector is not alone in exploring the issue of better support for caregivers in the workforce. The research confirms that it is not just because it is the right thing to do but also because it makes good business sense¹, positively impacting employee retention rates, individual productivity, and overall workplace culture². Caregiver employees bring skills that are advantageous to their employers including empathy, emotional intelligence, time management, leadership, and adaptability³.

While this study did not disaggregate results by race, Indigeneity, disability, or income, existing research and focus group insights suggest that caregivers from equity-deserving communities experience compounded barriers due to systemic inequities in income, access to benefits, intergenerational wealth, and culturally-appropriate care services. Future research should prioritize disaggregated data collection to better inform targeted policy and funding responses.

1 Supporting Caregivers in the Workplace, Roundtable Report, November 2024 (Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence)

<https://canadiancaregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SupportingCaregiversInTheWorkplaceRoundtableReport.pdf>

2 Five Good Ideas on Supporting Caregivers at the Workplace, Maytree Foundation webinar, Liv Mendelsohn, Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence <https://maytree.com/five-good-ideas/five-good-ideas-on-supporting-caregivers-at-the-workplace/>

3 <https://hbr.org/2023/08/research-caregiver-employees-bring-unique-value-to-companies>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scope & Methodology

The study included a literature review, a survey (205 respondents), five facilitated focus groups (total of 37 participants), ten interviews, and the preparation of this report. Participants for the focus groups and interviews were selected from the music community by Women in Music Canada and Music Publishers Canada with a view to hearing diverse perspectives from across the sector and across the country. Links to all the organizations referred to in the Executive Summary are included in the Research section of the report and additional details are provided in the Appendices: Appendix A - Full Survey Results; Appendix B - Focus Groups and Interview Summary Notes; and Appendix C - Additional Resources.

Key Common Themes

Common themes emerged consistently across the research including the literature review, survey, focus groups, and interviews. These include the need for:

- **GREATER AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO EXISTING RESOURCES** - Many caregivers are unaware of support already available through both music-specific and broader community organizations. A large majority (78%) of survey respondents reported that they are not aware of any organizations or programs that provide support for caregivers.
- **MORE FLEXIBLE WORKING MODELS** - This includes hybrid work, flexible hours, role sharing, and fractional employment options that better accommodate caregiving responsibilities.
- **REDUCED BARRIERS IN TRADITIONAL INDUSTRY PRACTICES** - Touring, rehearsing, producing, and attending industry events often follow rigid models that exclude caregivers. Suggestions include planning family-friendly practices from the outset, offering on-site childcare at conferences and performances, and developing resource guides for touring artists with caregiving responsibilities.
- **GREATER FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO OFFSET CAREGIVING COSTS** - Caregivers face additional expenses that are rarely accounted for in current funding models. There is a need for supports, stipends, and subsidies that include caregiving-related costs.
- **MORE PEER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES DESIGNED FOR CAREGIVERS** - Caregivers benefit from connecting with others who share similar challenges, both for emotional support and practical advice.
- **BEST PRACTICE POLICIES AND TEMPLATES FOR**

EMPLOYERS - Employers need access to clear, actionable guidelines to support caregiver employees, including flexible work policies and inclusive practices.

- **SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL SELF-CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH** - Caregivers often experience emotional strain, burnout, and "caregiver guilt." Resources to support mental health and well-being are essential to help individuals remain present and productive in the workplace.
- **RECOGNITION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL MISMATCH BETWEEN INDUSTRY DEMANDS AND CAREGIVING NEEDS** - The music industry's irregular hours, touring schedules, and late-night commitments often conflict with the consistent routines and availability required for caregiving.

Individuals are seeking support across a broad spectrum— from managing stress and mental health, to navigating the time demands of juggling work and caregiving, to finding financial relief from the added costs of care. These needs are not isolated; they are interconnected and impact a caregiver's ability to sustain and grow their career in the music industry.

Recommended Key Areas for Support

There are opportunities for both collaborative action and for each of the players from across the sector to improve practices. Employers can review internal policies to help support flexible work and safe disclosure from employees; funders can look to areas where they may be able to increase awareness and improve supports for caregivers; industry groups can continue to work closely together to spread the word, create new programming, and advocate for improvements, and government can address areas like EI reform, portable benefits, and caregiver tax policy. Following are more specifics.

1) IMPROVE SECTOR-WIDE AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO EXISTING RESOURCES

A lack of awareness was one of the most frequently cited issues across all research components.

- 78% of survey respondents reported not knowing of any organizations or programs that support caregivers in the music industry.
- Focus group and interview participants echoed this, describing feelings of emotional and mental overwhelm, uncertainty about where to turn, and fear of disclosing caregiving responsibilities to employers.

Employers often lack understanding of how caregiving challenges affect workforce well-being and productivity.

When they do recognize the issue, they are unsure where to find guidance on best practices.

WHILE VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS ALREADY OFFER SUPPORT, COORDINATION AND VISIBILITY ARE CHALLENGES. THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Launch a unified promotional and communications campaign that raises awareness of both the human need and the business case for caregiver support.
- Share information about existing resources—both music-specific and community-based.
- Create new resources and programming.
- Present findings from this report at major industry events (e.g., Women in Music Canada Global Summit 2026 – March 2-4⁴), alongside talks and panels featuring music workers, employers, and community organizations.

Long-term goal: Create a cultural shift that normalizes caregiver accommodation across the music sector.

2) PROMOTE FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE MODELS AND TOURING PRACTICES

The incompatibility between caregiving and the music industry's structure—irregular hours, late nights, and touring—was one of the most consistent barriers identified.

- 66% of caregivers spend more than 20 hours per week on caregiving.
- Over 50% report significant impacts on work availability and career advancement.
- Many experience burnout and mental health struggles.

Employers often overlook the positive attributes caregivers bring, such as emotional intelligence, time management, and adaptability.

THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Develop a 'Canadian Best Practices Charter', modeled after PiPA's UK initiative (details in the Research section of this report), offering tools and templates for employers to:
 - Understand caregiver challenges
 - Implement flexible work options (e.g., remote/hybrid work, flexible hours, role-sharing)
 - Reduce or rotate weekend/evening work
- Integrate caregiver support into organizational values.

- Rethink touring practices. Alternatives include:
 - Slow touring with shorter legs
 - Regional tours with family accommodation
 - Childcare-supported tours
 - Residencies that allow children
 - Increase artist and other industry professionals' awareness of and access to:
 - Tour funding options that include caregiving expenses (e.g. FACTOR, Canada Council, Musicaction)
 - Resources for managing self-care while touring
 - Encourage funders to help raise awareness of current funding models that include caregiving supports.

3) BUILD CAREER RESILIENCE/SELF-CARE OPPORTUNITIES

Low wages, freelance contracts, and lack of benefits make it difficult for caregivers to remain in the industry.

- Over 50% of survey respondents say caregiving significantly limits their work.
- 54% feel it restricts career advancement.

Participants expressed a need for:

- Mental health support to address burnout and emotional strain.
- Peer mentorship and networking in safe spaces.
- Career counseling, especially for those re-entering the industry after a gap.

THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO:

- Improve awareness and access to existing programs such as:
 - Unison's TELUS Health program
 - CIMA's Make It Better Mental Health Benefit
 - AFC's Mental Health & Wellness program

Caregivers also need:

- Business and financial advice.
- Coaching on time management and personal resilience.
- Guidance on alternative income models when touring is limited.

4) INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial strain is one of the most significant barriers for caregivers in the music industry. Low wages, freelance, and contract-based work, and the lack of benefits—particularly for independent and gig-based workers—create a double burden when combined with the high cost of caregiving. Many caregivers are forced to reduce their professional commitments or leave the industry altogether due to financial pressures.

While some Canadian organizations and funders offer targeted support—such as Musicaction's Parental Support Measures, Unison's emergency financial aid, and Manitoba Music's pilot inclusion of caregiving expenses—these programs are not widely known. This underscores the above-noted need for better communication and coordination across the sector.

THERE ARE SEVERAL ACTIONABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS:

- Improve awareness and access to existing financial programs
 - Coordinate outreach efforts with industry organizations to ensure caregivers know what's available
- Share examples and results of innovative new models for financial supports
 - Encourage funders and the broad community to communicate evolving programs that explicitly allow caregiving-related expenses—such as childcare, travel companions, and eldercare—in touring, showcasing, and residency grants
- Develop training initiatives
 - Partner with organizations (e.g. Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, GreenShield, SE Health, Balancing Act, unions) to offer workshops on:
 - Navigating the healthcare system
 - Accessing financial aid and benefits
 - Budgeting and career sustainability for caregivers

Next Steps

Caregivers in the Canadian music industry face a complex set of challenges that impact their ability to sustain and grow their careers. This report highlights the urgent need for coordinated action across the sector to improve awareness, flexibility, financial support, and access to resources. By working together—industry organizations, employers, funders, and caregivers themselves—the music community can build a more inclusive and resilient ecosystem where caregiving and creative work are not in conflict but can coexist and thrive. Looking ahead, there is also potential for technology-based solutions—such as digital platforms for resource sharing, virtual peer support, and caregiver coordination tools—to play a role in bridging gaps and enhancing accessibility across the sector.

4 <https://www.womeninmusic.ca/en/events/2026-international-womens-week-summit>

THE RESEARCH

Literature Review Highlights

The literature review covered the music sector, other arts sectors, and the broader community, both in Canada and internationally, with a focus on individuals, employers, and community. It confirmed that this is an international issue that affects all sectors of society and impacts a significant number of people.

A 2023 survey⁵ by the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence⁶ underscores the widespread impact of caregiving in Canada:

"Canada is a nation of caregivers. One in four of us is a caregiver today, and half of all Canadians will become a caregiver in their lifetimes. This bears material impacts on all aspects of life, from the economy, to the workplace, to schools and even to our political institutions."⁷

The nature of working in the music sector, as well as other performing arts disciplines, adds specific challenges including the demands of touring, irregular and late hours, and the impact of some long-standing attitudes in the sector.⁸

The impact affects both arts workers and those that employ them. While there are no studies on the economic impact on the music industry specifically, there is research on the impact on employers generally. A 2020 report from the Vanier Institute, *A Snapshot of Family Caregiving and Work in Canada*, concluded that employers across Canada lose an estimated \$5.5 billion annually in productivity due to caregiving-related absenteeism.⁹

LEADERSHIP & AWARENESS BUILDING

There is a broad range of Canadian and international organizations doing good work in raising awareness and addressing various aspects of the issue, but there is room for a lot more to be done. Only a few focus directly on caregivers in the music industry.

In Canada, Balancing Act¹⁰ has been a leader in addressing improved support for parents and caregivers working across the arts. Their research shows that 71.9% of artists/arts workers have turned down work because of caring responsibilities.¹¹ The organization's Level UP!¹² program provides financial support, consultation, and evaluation for the creation of policies and practices that support caregivers. The focus is on four key strategic areas: flexible working models, workplace policies and onboarding processes, care solutions, and a compassion fund. The website provides a wide range of resources, many of which address needs arising from this study.

The Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence supports and empowers caregivers and care providers across all sectors, advances the knowledge and capacity of the caregiving field, and advocates for effective social policy with a disability-informed approach.¹³ In addition to advocating for better pan-Canada public policies, they do on-going research on the issue and provide guides to existing resources. They support a range of education and leadership development programs including the creation of the Caregiver Grief Connexion, a bereavement support virtual training program to help health care professionals provide appropriate support to caregivers in the period of bereavement¹⁴.

The Maytree Foundation recently offered a webinar entitled Supporting Caregivers in the Workplace¹⁵ as part of their Five Good Ideas series. The webinar featured an interview with the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence Executive Director, Liv Mendelsohn, and Working Caregiver Initiative Lead, Christa Haanstra. They shared highlights from their *Supporting Caregivers in the Workplace Roundtable Report*¹⁶, including that supporting working caregivers helps organizations with improved retention, productivity, and workplace culture. A significant statistic to note: "62% of caregivers balance work and care, representing 6.1 million employees – or

5 https://canadiancaregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CCCE_Canadian-Caregiving-Survey_Summary-of-Findings.pdf

6 <https://canadiancaregiving.org/>

7 https://canadiancaregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CCCE_Canadian-Caregiving-Survey_Summary-of-Findings.pdf

8 https://musiccanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DI_Music-Canada_EnablersandBarriers_0525.pdf

9 <https://vanierinstitute.ca/resource/a-snapshot-of-family-caregiving-and-work-in-canada/>

10 <https://balancingactcanada.com/en/about-us/>

11 <https://balancingactcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Balancing-Act-Sector-Data-Making-the-case-for-supporting-artist-parents-and-caregivers.pdf>

12 <https://balancingactcanada.com/en/programs/level-up/>

13 <https://canadiancaregiving.org/about-us/what-we-do/>

14 <https://canadiancaregiving.org/impact/education-and-leadership/>

15 <https://maytree.com/five-good-ideas/five-good-ideas-on-supporting-caregivers-at-the-workplace/>

16 <https://canadiancaregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SupportingCaregiversInTheWorkplaceRoundtableReport.pdf>

35% of the labour force". Their research emphasizes the importance of recognizing the value of caregivers, and understanding, prioritizing, and supporting them. Oftentimes, caregivers are juggling workplace duties with their responsibilities caring for loved ones. Employers can benefit from caregivers' skills that can be transferred to the workplace. By building a workplace culture that is equitable and flexible for caregivers, both the organization and the individual can succeed.

In the U.K., a leading organization addressing the issue is Parents & Carers in the Performing Arts (PiPA)¹⁷. Like Balancing Act, PiPA embraces the broader performing arts including music. The organization is evidence driven, grounding its work in research and data, much of which is available for free on its website¹⁸. In addition to research, PiPA offers a best practices charter (the PiPA Pledge¹⁹) and an accompanying program²⁰ that provides access to its networks and to tools, resources, and policies for others to build their own caregiver practices. It encourages the creation of an industry caregiving certification for "family-friendly" employer best practices to incentivize organizations to address caregiver support. There is a cost to access the program that goes toward sustaining it.

In Australia, Support Act²¹, the music industry's charity, delivers crisis relief and services to people across the music sector, including the Support Act Wellbeing Helpline²². The Helpline is a free phone counseling service for anyone working in Australian music or creative industries, including both small and mid-sized organizations that do not have in-house HR expertise. Staffed by experienced counselors, it provides help with a broad range of issues, from mental health to career concerns, financial management, and conflict resolution. People in the sector can access 12 free sessions.

In the U.S., the Parent Artist Advocacy League for Performing Arts + Media (PAAL)²³ serves as a national hub for individuals in the performing arts and media with caregiver responsibilities and the organizations that support them. PAAL's The New Standard of Care for Caregivers²⁴ outlines recommended steps for employers and organizations to provide ethical support to caregivers. Another American organization, Family Alliance in Music

(FAM)²⁵, offers education, resources, and financial support to parents and caregivers in the music industry with a view to creating a healthier industry where caring for a family and pursuing a career in music can co-exist. For employers, it provides the FAM Fact Guide²⁶ that offers basic facts and data on the importance of understanding the issues, educating the music industry on available resources and facilitating on-going conversations on how to improve support including providing adequate benefits.

TOURING, TRAVEL, EVENTS

The research highlights specific challenges faced by caregivers in the music industry, including touring, networking, attending industry events, and accessing other career development opportunities while still attending to those for whom they care. There are some emerging examples of organizations from across the arts sector who are taking a proactive approach to providing support.

Folk Canada²⁷ makes their conference more accessible to caregivers by providing free admission to children accompanied by a registered caregiver and free on-site childcare options. This can also apply to adults who are being cared for by an attendee and to the caregiver attendee themselves. This kind of approach demonstrates how small changes can make big differences in caregiver inclusion.

MOTHRA²⁸, a Toronto-based collective, offers an artist residency program²⁹ that enables participating artists to work with and alongside their child.

An example from the film industry, the Berlinale Kids Package³⁰ - part of the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) - helps parents attend the European Film Market by providing access to the Berlinale Kindergarten and allowing children and their caregivers entry to the exhibition venue and affiliated hotel.

Closer to home, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) partners with providers like Kids & Company³¹ to offer subsidized childcare. Industry parents can take advantage of a special day rate at any of the Kids & Company locations during the festival.

In Finland, the Korsholm Music Festival³² recently piloted free babysitting for concertgoers, aiming to make attendance easier for parents. Children are looked after by a childcare professional and festival staff, with activities like drawing and crafts as well as other activities. Although not specifically aimed at music workers, this initiative could benefit musicians playing at the festival.

SELF-CARE

Caregivers across all sectors, including music, often face challenges related to self-care, burnout, and mental health.

Organizations like The Ontario Caregiver Organization³³ provide a wide range of resources, including Caregiver Toolkits³⁴, some of which are specifically designed to serve Indigenous, Black, and 2SLGBTQIA communities. The organization also offers a helpline, peer support (both individual and in groups), counseling, and e-learning resources that address all sectors.

The Unison Fund³⁵, a Canadian charity, provides help to professional music industry workers in times of personal hardship (mental, physical, financial, emotional). In addition to offering several funds that provide emergency financial support, Unison offers, on a no-fee basis, mental health and counseling support through TELUS Health³⁶, a program that provides counseling by phone, in person, or online/virtual.

The Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA)³⁷ is the not-for-profit national trade association representing the English-language, Canadian-owned sector of the music industry. Members are Canadian-owned companies and representatives of Canadian-owned companies involved in every aspect of the music, sound recording and music-related industries. CIMA has partnered with Inkblot, a Canadian digital mental health provider, to offer Make It Better³⁸, a benefit that gives members access to confidential, personalized counseling support.

Although not music-specific, the Actors' Fund of Canada (AFC)³⁹ helps people working in Canada's performing arts and entertainment sector to maintain their health, dignity,

17 <https://pipacampaign.org/>

18 https://pipacampaign.org/research/balancing_act_2024?referrer=research

19 <https://pipacampaign.org/the-pledge/>

20 <https://pipacampaign.org/pipa-programme/>

21 <https://supportact.org.au/>

22 <https://supportact.org.au/individual-support/wellbeing-helpline/>

23 <https://www.paaltheatre.com/about-us>

24 <https://www.paaltheatre.com/new-standard-of-care>

25 <https://www.familyallianceinmusic.org/>

26 <https://www.familyallianceinmusic.org/resources/blog-post-title-one-32yah>

27 <https://www.folkcanada.com/faq>, see 'Can I bring my children with me and if I do, do they need to register?'

28 <https://mothra.ca/#>

29 <https://mothra.ca/#residency>

30 https://www.efm-berlinale.de/en/services/accreditation/registration.html#/subcontent=tab_kindergarten

31 <https://kidsandcompany.com/>

32 <https://www.korsholmmusicfestival.fi/news?article=1934>

33 <https://ontariocaregiver.ca/>

34 <https://ontariocaregiver.ca/managing-care/toolkits/>

35 <https://unisonfund.ca/mission-commitment/>

36 <https://unisonfund.ca/services/counselling-health-solutions-supported-by-rbc-foundation/>

37 <https://www.cimamusic.ca/who-we-are-what-we-do/>

38 <https://www.cimamusic.ca/what-we-do/music-initiatives/make-it-better-mental-health-benefit/>

39 <https://afchelps.ca/about/>

and ability to work through a variety of programs that address mental health and wellness, financial wellness, and career sustainability. In addition to online tools and resources, the organization provides access to peer support.

PEER NETWORKING & COMMUNITY

Peer networking and community support are vital elements in building a successful music career⁴⁰ and can also help alleviate the stress and loneliness that many caregivers experience. However, industry events often overlook the needs of those with caregiving responsibilities. Some organizations offer proactive support.

Communities like Moms in Music⁴¹, working in collaboration with Women in Music Canada, provides access to those with similar concerns. Founded in the U.S., the group aims to create a safe space for women to connect, share resources, and navigate the unique challenges of caregiving while pursuing a music career.

Many music industry associations, including the commissioners of this report, Music Publishers Canada⁴² and Women in Music Canada⁴³, offer members access to events and programs that provide opportunities to interact with industry colleagues.

There are a number of community organizations that offer peer support groups, in addition to other resources, to caregivers across all sectors. One example is Caregivers Nova Scotia⁴⁴, a non-profit that provides free programs and services to unpaid family and friend caregivers in several locations across that province. They host over 20 facilitated peer support groups a month that provide a safe environment for participants to share advice and support.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

A few organizations do provide much needed financial support, to offset some of the costs of caregiving while pursuing a career in music. Grant recipients can also ask funders directly if caregiving is an eligible expense. By sharing their needs, they may help influence future eligibility and policies.

The Musicaction Foundation⁴⁵, a Montreal-based non-

profit organization, focuses on the development of music by supporting the production and marketing of sound recordings with the majority of its resources allocated to French-language vocal music. Its Parental Support Program⁴⁶ helps performing artists with children under six years old, as well as entrepreneurs, employees, and musicians, in their career development on the national and international stage by covering expenses for a travelling companion entirely dedicated to childcare. The maximum assistance is \$3000 per trip which can cover up to 75% of eligible costs.

The previously mentioned Unison Fund⁴⁷, will, as part of its emergency financial support programs, provide funds to music workers who have caregiver needs although that is not their specific focus.

Balancing Act's 2025/26 Level UP! initiative⁴⁸ supports eligible pilot projects that focus on care and caregivers. Level UP! Partners will be eligible to receive financial support of up to \$3000, consultation and peer exchange opportunities with other partners. Past Level UP! initiatives have funded on-site childcare, stipends for childcare, and caregiver supportive residencies.

The Canada Council for the Arts⁴⁹ has recently included childcare and dependent costs as an eligible expense across most individual applications.

Manitoba Music⁵⁰, through its Market Access Fund⁵¹, is piloting allowing limited access to financial resources for caregiving expenses for the 2025/26 fiscal year. This initiative is supported in part by Balancing Act Canada and Women in Music Canada as part of the Level UP! program.

Creative BC⁵² allows childcare as an eligible expense in its Career Development program.

FACTOR⁵³ (the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings) provides support to Canadian recording artists and songwriters as well as managers, labels, publishers, and event producers through a variety of programs. Some funding streams can cover childcare expenses related to touring and showcase costs.

SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

Many challenges faced by caregivers in the industry stem from broader financial and systemic issues, some of which are specific to the industry and others to the particular structure of Canada's employment, social services, and tax systems.

Gig work is often badly paid and freelance and contract players typically lack access to Employment Insurance (EI). EI benefits are not portable, meaning workers lose coverage when changing jobs.

Many of the small and medium-sized enterprises that dominate the sector only provide basic mandatory benefits. As a result, many workers do not have health, dental, life and disability insurance, or retirement packages. There are some solutions emerging from other sectors and locations that might be adapted to the music industry in Canada.

INNOVATIVE SUPPORTS FROM OTHER SECTORS/JURISDICTIONS

GreenShield⁵⁴, a non-profit social enterprise company focused on advancing health equity in Canada, has partnered with another non-profit social enterprise, SE Health (Saint Elizabeth Health Care)⁵⁵, to co-design and pilot a transformative employee benefit. This program offers access to certified personal support workers for the dependent parents or grandparents of employees. It is currently available to SE Health's workforce, of whom 80% are women, 60% are from equity-seeking communities, and 55% are "double-duty caregivers" balancing professional healthcare roles with caregiving responsibilities at home. The initiative aims to help prevent and alleviate caregiver burnout and promote equity and inclusion in the workforce.

Other countries offer examples of more comprehensive, wraparound support for creative professionals.

- Ireland launched a 3-year pilot Basic Income for Arts program⁵⁶ in 2022. Due to positive initial response, the pilot was extended by 6 months for further evaluation. Furthermore, eligible Irish artists do not pay income tax on earnings from their artworks up to 50,000 euros⁵⁷.

40 <https://musicinmotioncanada.ca/why-its-important-to-connect-with-others-in-the-music-industry/>

41 <https://www.momsinmusic.org/#:~:text=We%20are%20a%20community%20of,where%20women%20are%20often%20marginalized.>

42 <https://www.musicpublishing.ca/about>

43 <https://womeninmusic.ca/en/about/about-us>

44 <https://caregiversns.org/how-we-help/peer-support-groups>

45 <https://musicaction.ca/a-propos/>

46 <https://musicaction.ca/programmes/mesure-de-soutien-parental/>

47 <https://unisonfund.ca/>

48 <https://balancingactcanada.com/en/programs/level-up/level-up-call-2025-26/>

49 <https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants>

50 <https://www.manitobamusic.com/>

51 <https://www.manitobamusic.com/market-access>

52 <https://creativebc.com/funding-programs/music-sound-recording-programs/career-development/>

53 <https://www.factor.ca/>

54 <https://www.greenshield.ca/en-ca/about>

55 <https://seh.com/about/about-us>

56 https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/BIA_Interviews_Report_2025.pdf

57 <https://visualartists.ie/how-to-manual/artist-tax-exemption#:~:text=Artist%20Tax%20Exemption%20applies%20to,contract%20for%20commission%20of%20work.>

- France offers the *régime salarié intermittent à employeurs multiples*⁵⁸ (*intermittent employee system with multiple employers*), a special unemployment system for intermittently salaried workers with multiple employers. This program provides benefits to eligible creative workers in areas such as health-maternity leave, which can be especially helpful to caregivers.
- Germany supports artists and creative professionals through the *Künstlersozialkasse* (KSK)⁵⁹, a social security insurance program that includes compulsory statutory pension, health, and long-term nursing care coverage. Contributions are income-based, making it more accessible for freelance and gig workers.

COMMON CHALLENGES ACROSS JURISDICTIONS

Regardless of jurisdiction or organizational focus, the literature review revealed consistent challenges and needs.

- Individuals are seeking support for personal self-care, managing stress, and juggling caregiving with career development.
- The irregular hours, late nights, and touring demands of the music industry often conflict with caregiving responsibilities.
- Many caregivers are unaware of existing support—whether offered by the broader community or within the music sector.

Employers need greater awareness of the issue and the impact it has on recruitment, retention, and productivity. They also need insights into and access to best practices such as Balancing Act's Flexible Working Models Strategy⁶⁰ and McMaster University's Supporting Carer-Workers: Checklist for Employers⁶¹.

Greater success for all stakeholders affected by this issue, including funders and government, will be promoted by coordinating awareness of available resources, identifying gaps and understanding how to best fill those.

These issues are explored further in the Executive Summary, Key Common Themes, and Recommended Key Areas for Support sections of this report, which synthesize findings from the literature review, survey,

focus groups, and interviews. Appendix C provides a more detailed list of Canadian organizations—both within and outside the music community—that offer caregiver support, including those referenced by survey and focus group participants.

58 https://www.cleiss.fr/docs/regimes/regime_france_independants_en.html#pf

59 https://www.kuenstlersozialkasse.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Mediencenter_K%C3%BCnstler_Publizisten/Allg_Infos_u_Anmeldeunterlagen/Aufsatz_zur_KSVG-VP_-_englische_Version.pdf

60 <https://balancingactcanada.com/en/programs/level-up/flexible-working-models/>

61 <https://ghw.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/04/PG-Tools-Employer-Checklist.pdf>



THE RESEARCH

Survey Highlights

As part of this needs assessment, Women in Music Canada and Music Publishers Canada conducted a survey that was answered by those who currently have caregiver responsibilities and work in the music sector in Canada as well as those who have exited their music careers due to caregiving demands. The survey, which was distributed and widely promoted by Music Publishers Canada and Women in Music Canada, was live from March 6 to April 17, 2025, receiving 205 responses from across the Canadian music community. The questionnaire and full results are available in Appendix A. Key findings are described below.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender: 88% identified as women, 10% as men, and the remainder as non-binary or Two-Spirit.

Age

- 25–34 (12%)
- 35–44 (43%)
- 45–54 (29%)
- 55–64 (10%)
- 65+ (3%)
- 3%: Prefer not to answer

Location

- Ontario (53%)
- British Columbia (15%)
- Other provinces and territories (1–7%)
- No responses from Northwest Territories or Nunavut

Industry Roles

Respondents represented a wide range of roles, often working in more than one category. The top six categories were:

- Artist (50%)
- Label (16%)
- Live music venue, festival, or live music (14%)
- Artist management (13%)
- Publishing (12%)
- Music industry association (12%)
- An additional 17% selected "Other," reflecting the diversity of roles in the sector.

Employment Status

- Full-time (41%)
- Self-employed (24%)
- Freelance/contract (12%)
- Part-time (8%)
- Left the sector (4%)
- Other (8%)

Retention Concerns

- 46% have considered leaving the industry
- 11% have already left
- 10% are unsure
- Only 31% have not considered leaving

The large number of those who have considered leaving or who have left is cause for concern.

Caregiving Responsibilities

- Children (71%)
- Aging adults (39%)
- Others requiring care (11%)
- Dual caregiving (e.g., children and aging adults) (27%)

"Caregiving for both my child and a terminally ill parent significantly impacts my availability and capacity to work in the music industry. It's not just the matter of time, it's also the mental and emotional bandwidth that's often stretched thin."

- Time commitment: 66% spend more than 20 hours per week on caregiving
- Impact on work:
 - 50% say caregiving significantly affects their ability to work.
 - 53% say it limits their ability to pursue promotions or career advancement.

"The time that I spend caregiving takes me away from my work and although I can sometimes respond to emails, etc. on my phone, it isn't the same as being fully able to continue my work."

"I ask myself—how candid and transparent can I be with new potential employers or places I'm seeking opportunity for outside projects? Can I tell them that I'm a mom, or a single mom? Does it make me less desirable?"

"If my work knew I was dealing with all of this they would have the impression that I can't do my job. My work does not know. I can do my job. If they think I need support, which I do, they will think I am not capable of my commitment to my job and the company (travel, meetings etc.)."

CHALLENGES IN MUSIC INDUSTRY PRACTICES

When asked about specific music industry practices that make caregiving difficult, respondents identified a range of issues. The top three were:

- Long work hours
- Low wages
- Lack of benefits

These were followed by:

- Lack of understanding of caregiver challenges
- Lack of flexibility
- Touring demands
- Limited advancement opportunities

Additionally, 20% selected "Other," indicating further concerns not captured in the predefined options. These were often elaborated on in open-ended responses.

"The music industry is not a 9-5, and I'm a single mom so it can be challenging at times to balance these two things. I rely on my mother to babysit often in the evenings and she's aging."

"You have to be available 24/7 for your elderly parent."

"As a producer, songwriter and artist, working hours have never been consistent, and a huge part of what I do is working around other people's schedules to make art happen. I cannot do this right now, nor can I sacrifice any time as, with most traditional artist careers, I do not bring in enough occasional income [royalties, show income, etc...] to pay for childcare. Without being able to cover the cost of living and childcare, I am left not working in music at all, after 26 years of non-stop persistence."

"This is the first time in a nearly 20-year career that I have been invited to a conversation about caregiving specifically. The stigmatization around talking about it or inviting caregivers into the space has been real."

DESIRED SUPPORTS AND PROGRAMS

Respondents were asked what kinds of support or programs would help them balance caregiving with their music industry roles. The top responses included:

- Flexible schedules
- Remote work options
- Caregiver policies (e.g., time away from work)
- Access to support groups and mental health services
- Information on accessing community services
- Information on accessing support while on tour

Again, many selected "Other," and their comments provide valuable insights:

"My experience as a caregiver in the music industry has been positive because of my employer. I receive support including flexible hours, time off, access to mental health resources and healthcare."

"I have an industry position and would like to attend conferences in other cities (I live in a smaller music market) but I do not have overnight care for my son if my husband is not available. Normalizing childcare at conferences and having programs, shows, get-togethers or activities that parents and their kids could attend while everyone is networking at bars at the end of the day would be a huge gain."

"I believe that since the pandemic, independent music companies have become more flexible and creative in their employment strategies. Realizing that as long as the work gets done, people have personal lives that are vital and important to them. When we have a solid personal life, this is often when our work improves, too."

"You need to allow musicians to outsource their own people to help care for their children. For example—if I were to be on tour I would have to bring my baby because they are so young, but I would only want my partner or mother to be the one helping with that. That should be encouraged and supported and there should be compensation towards that [accommodation, per diem, etc]."

"I'm fortunate to work with a progressive company that allows for creativity and flexibility around child care duties."

"Family-friendly networking opportunities; training the industry to be less chauvinistic and ageist."

"Normalizing fractional or flexible employment (e.g., 75% full-time)—including this in job postings. More thorough policies around paid time off (or even allowance for unpaid time off). Having 5 days off might be reasonable for a healthy single person, but it's not enough to manage caretaking responsibilities."

"Actual services in the community (not more info—I have all the info—there are just not enough supports). Knowledge in the music industry that many of us, even those who are well known, in our old age do not have enough supports, not enough money to live."

"Childcare at events and gigs (like a festival daycare program). Budgets built into grants for childcare personnel to come on tours or to pay for childcare to assist a partner if musicians are away on tour."

"Supports where women who have 'been there' share what worked for them in a non-judgmental way that can give others ideas for what might be possible."

"Gov't at all levels needs to step up and add more support for seniors and caregivers."

"Legal advice about rights at work as a woman or non-binary person without prejudice or discrimination from employer. Benefits that cover legal fees to ensure all is followed. Legal fund from WIMC or Music Publishers to help women experiencing employment infringement issues to make sure all are treated with respect, integrity, and above all else, adhere to the human rights code."

AWARENESS OF EXISTING SUPPORTS

When asked about their awareness of organizations or programs that support caregivers in the music industry or broader community:

- 76% reported they were not aware of any
- 20% said they were aware, and provided a range of examples (included in Appendix C)

This highlights a significant gap in awareness and communication. There is a clear need to better promote existing services—both music-specific and general—including:

- Music-specific: Balancing Act, AFC, Unison, SOCAN, CIMA, Women in Music Canada, FACTOR, Manitoba Music, Music Nova Scotia
- Broader community: Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, Ontario Health at Home

THE RESEARCH

THERE WERE 5 FOCUS GROUPS AS FOLLOWS:

- Harmonizing Work and Family: Supporting Parents and Caregivers in the Music Industry (webinar moderated by Robyn Stewart, ED, Women in Music Canada, focus on mothers) - April 10/25
- Indigenous Music Summit, Caregiver Round Table (In-person/Indigenous participants) - June 6/25
- Music Caregivers (Creatives) Round Table - Sept. 23/25 (virtual)
- Music Caregivers (Business) Round Table - Sept. 23/25 (virtual)
- Folk Music Ontario - October 3/24

Focus Groups & Interview Highlights

A total of 10 individual interviews were conducted including Canadian and international creatives, industry business people, support organization personnel, and others.

The focus group discussions and the interviews reinforced the key needs identified in the literature review and survey, while adding personal perspective and lived experiences. Participants spoke candidly about the realities of managing caregiving while trying to further their careers in the music industry, and the emotional, financial, and structural challenges they face.

The interviews were particularly moving when individuals spoke of feeling guilt or a stigma around not being able to fully commit to either their caregiver responsibilities or their career development. Many spoke of feeling isolated and lacking support systems. Caregivers want acknowledgement of the challenges they face and support in handling both roles. Several interviewees talked about communities like Moms in Music and Young Caregivers⁶² that offer networking and even 'burnout' coaches to help manage stress.

Navigating the health care and caregiver support systems is difficult and time-consuming. It was described as a 'patchwork' by one interviewee, with the various parts often not communicating with each other.

Both the focus-group participants and interviewees, particularly those focused on the creative side of the business, spoke of their passion for music and the sacrifices they have made to sustain their careers.

Following is a summary of responses from both the focus groups and the interviews, organized around common themes. Additional insights are found in Appendix B.

Access to Resources

- Need for childcare, especially overnight and during late-night events
- Access to mental health services, therapy, and meal delivery
- Limited awareness of existing programs like Level UP! until recently discovered

- Lack of institutional funding for touring artists with children
- Microgrants, royalties, and stipends are all needed to cover caregiving costs

Flexible & Inclusive Work Models

- Slow or family-friendly touring models are often ineligible for funding
- Grant systems expect fast-paced, multi-city tours
- Need to normalize children in music spaces and provide accommodations
- Indigenous communities offer inclusive caregiving models that value elders
- Desire for fractional employment options (e.g., 75% full-time)
- Need for remote work and flexible scheduling

Financial & Structural Support

- Financial strain for self-employed and single parents
- 70- to 80-hour work weeks due to lack of support
- Partner or family financial help is often essential
- Outdated grant structures do not reflect caregiving realities
- Mothers receive less community support than fathers
- Legal advice and protections needed for caregivers facing discrimination

Community & Peer Support Networks

- Family, bandmates, and parents as informal support systems
- Need for safe spaces to ask for help and share strategies
- Peer mentorship from experienced caregivers is highly valued
- Advocacy and education within communities are vital
- Feelings of isolation and being misunderstood are common

Mental Health & Self-Care

- Emotional labor is invisible and often uncompensated
- "Mom guilt" around missing milestones and being judged
- Constant guilt from leaving either work or family
- Burnout from juggling caregiving and career demands
- Need for mental health support tailored to caregivers
- Prioritizing both kids and work is mentally exhausting

⁶² <https://youngcaregivers.ca/>

Appendix A

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

As part of this needs assessment, Women in Music Canada and Music Publishers Canada conducted a survey that was answered by those who currently have caregiver responsibilities and work in the music sector in Canada as well as those who have exited their music careers due to caregiving demands. The survey, which was distributed and widely promoted by Music Publishers Canada and Women in Music Canada, was live from March 6 to April 17, 2025, receiving 205 responses from across the Canadian music community. A summary of the results is included in the report narrative and following are the full results:

Q1. ARE YOU CURRENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING CARE TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

(Select all that apply)

- Children
- Aging adults
- Individuals requiring personal or primary care
- None of the above

Based on the responses, the majority of participants are looking after children (71%), with the next largest group (39%) caring for aging adults and an additional 11% for others requiring personal or primary care. Many (27%) have responsibility for more than one group, often children and aging adults.

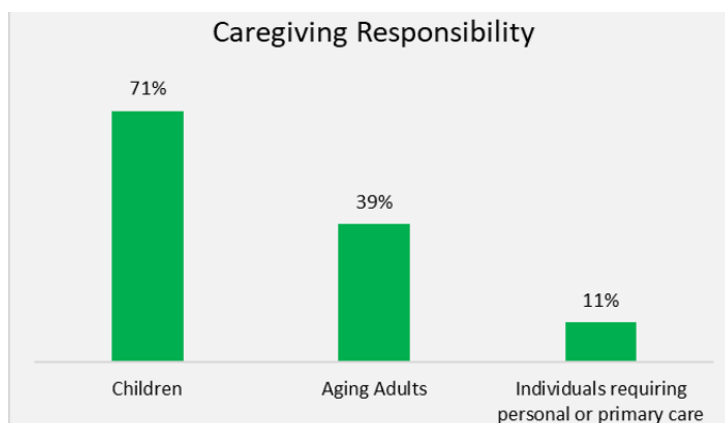


Fig. 1: Caregiving responsibility (n = 205)

Q2. HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK DO YOU SPEND ON CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES?

- None
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- More than 20

Most respondents (66%) reported spending more than 20 hours per week on caregiving responsibilities. Smaller proportions of participants reported spending 11-20 hours (11%), 6-10 hours (12%), and 1-5 hours (8%). A minimal number of respondents either reported no time spent or were unsure/didn't answer (1%).

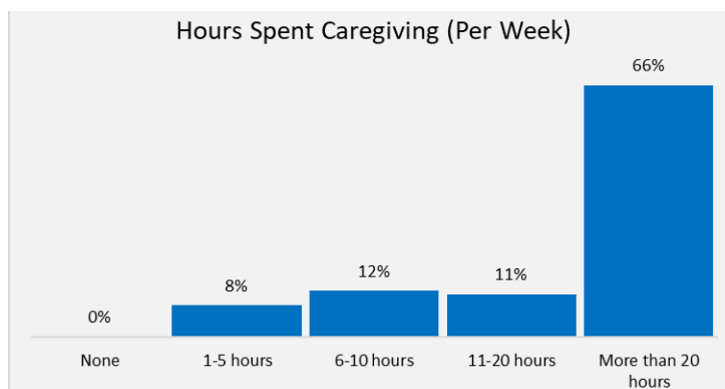


Fig. 2: Hours spent caregiving per week (n = 205)

Q3. HOW MUCH DOES CAREGIVING IMPACT YOUR ABILITY/AVAILABILITY TO WORK IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Significantly

Caregiving responsibilities appear to have a substantial impact on participants' ability or availability to work in the music industry. Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that caregiving significantly affects their work, while another third (33%) reported a moderate impact. A

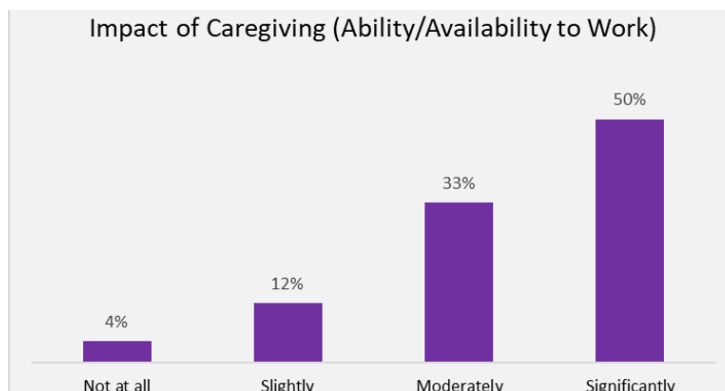


Fig. 3: Impact of caregiving on ability or availability to work in the music industry (n = 205)

smaller portion (12%) experienced only a slight effect, and just 4% reported no impact at all.

"Caregiving for both my child and a terminally ill parent significantly impacts my availability and capacity to work in the music industry. It's not just a matter of time; it's also the mental and emotional bandwidth that's often stretched thin. On top of that, many roles in the music space tend to be low-paying and inflexible, which makes it even more difficult for people like me, who have serious time constraints, to participate fully or sustainably."

Q4. HOW MUCH DOES CAREGIVING IMPACT YOUR ABILITY/AVAILABILITY TO SEEK PROMOTIONS OR ADVANCEMENT OR NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Significantly

Over half of the respondents (53%) indicated that caregiving significantly impacts their ability to pursue promotions, advancement, or new opportunities in the music industry. An additional 25% reported a moderate impact, while 13% experienced only a slight effect. Just 5% said caregiving had no impact at all, while another 5% did not provide a response.

Q5. ARE THERE ANY INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PRACTICES THAT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU AS A CAREGIVER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY OR ADVANCE YOUR CAREER AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO? (Select all that apply)

- Long work hours
- Low wages
- Lack of benefits
- Lack of flexibility/accommodation
- Lack of understanding of my situation by those around me
- Lack of advancement opportunities
- Demands of touring
- Other, please specify
- No specific caregiver policies

Caregivers in the music industry cited several industry-specific practices that hinder their participation or career advancement. Based on the responses, the most reported barriers were long work hours (16%), low wages (16%), and lack of benefits (15%). Following with 13% of the responses, is a lack of understanding of their situation as caregivers, while 12% reported a lack of flexibility. Other challenges included the demands of touring (11%) and limited advancement opportunities (10%). A minimal amount (6%) selected "Other," suggesting a variety of additional, unlisted concerns. A small number (1%) reported that an absence of specific caregiver policies hinders their participation or career advancement.

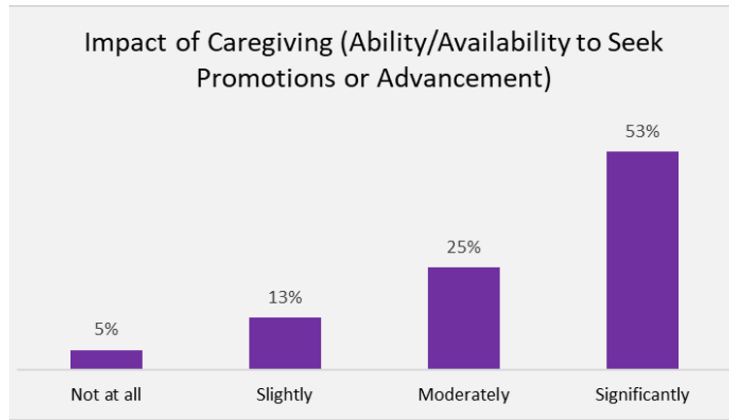


Fig. 4: Impact of caregiving on ability to seek promotions or advancements (n = 205)

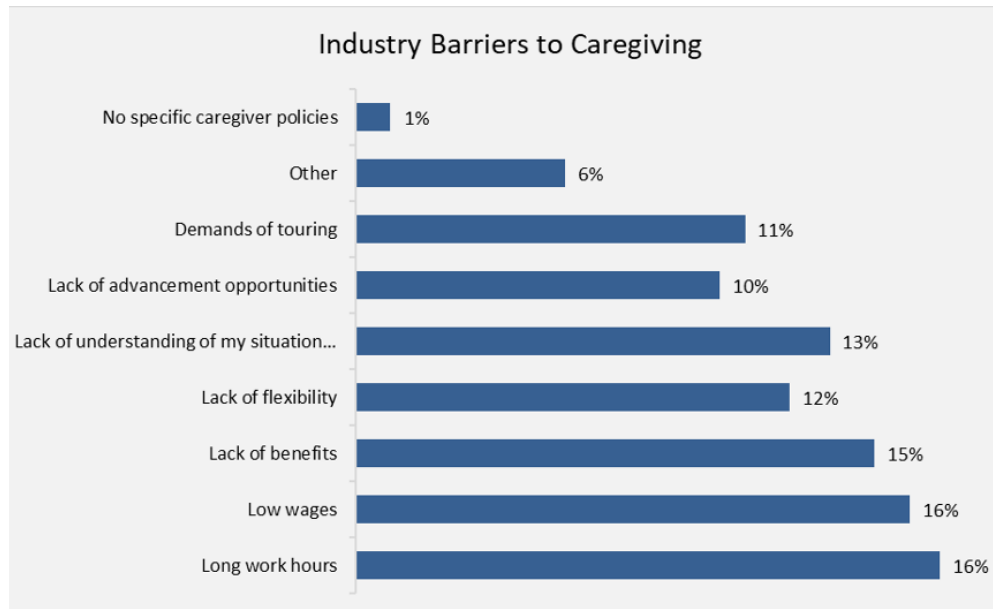


Fig. 5: Industry barriers to caregiving (n = 205)

Most respondents selected more than one challenge, highlighting the overlapping difficulties of caregiving within the music industry.

Q6. WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT OR PROGRAMS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO ALLOW YOU TO FULFILL BOTH YOUR CAREGIVING AND MUSIC INDUSTRY ROLES? (Select all that apply)

- Remote work options
- Flexible schedules
- Caregiver policies (e.g. time away from work, etc.)
- More information on how to access services in my community
- More information on how to access services while on tour
- Access to support groups including mental health support
- Other, please specify
- None of the above

The majority of responses show that flexible schedules (19%), remote work options (18%), and caregiver policies (18%) would be most helpful in fulfilling both caregiving and music industry needs. Other desired supports were access to support groups including mental health (12%), more information on how to access services within one's community (12%), and more information on how to access services while on tour (10%). A substantial amount (10%) selected "Other", accounting for additional support or programs unmentioned. A small number (1%) reported that none of the support mentioned would be helpful. Most participants selected multiple options, highlighting the wide range of support needed for caregivers in the music industry.

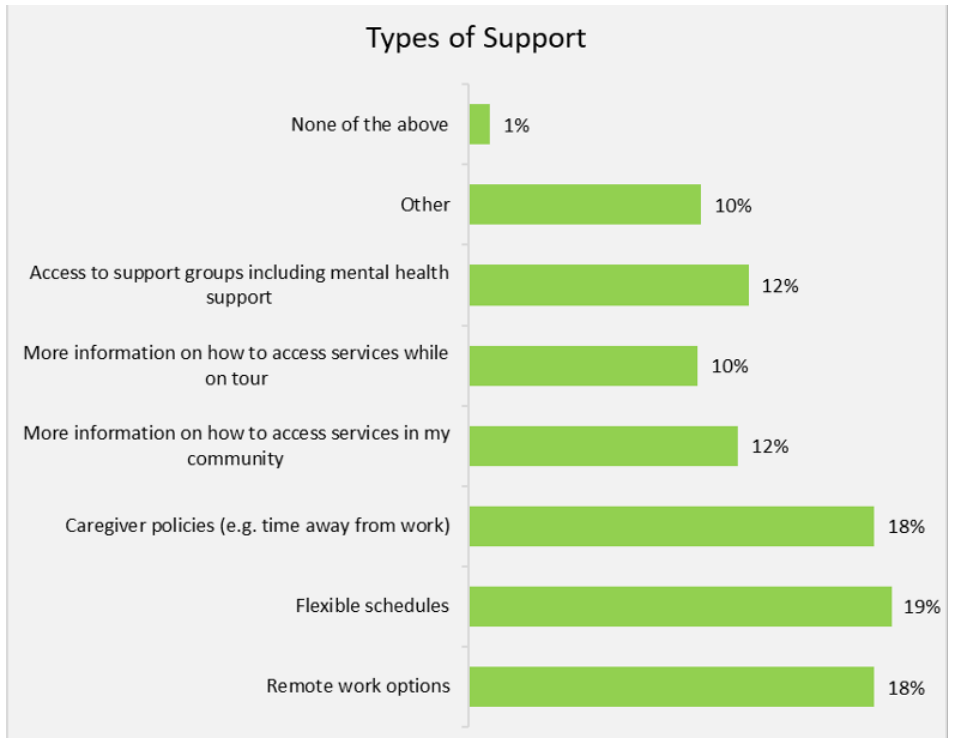


Fig. 6: Types of support or programs (n = 205)

Q7. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY ORGANIZATIONS OR PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND/OR RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY OR IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- Yes, please specify
- No

An overwhelming majority of respondents (78%) reported that they are not aware of any organizations or programs that provide support for caregivers. Only 20% reported being aware of such support systems. This suggests a significant gap in visibility and accessibility of caregiver resources in the music industry.

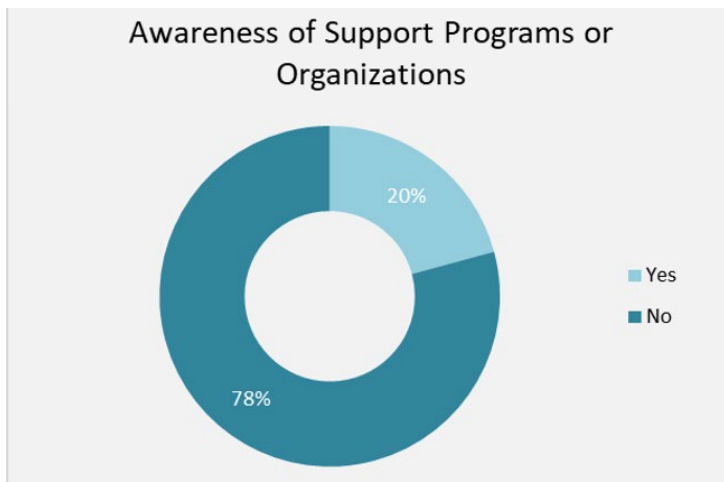


Fig. 7: Awareness of support programs or organizations (n = 205)

Q8. HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED LEAVING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY DUE TO CHALLENGES RELATED TO CAREGIVING?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- I have already left the industry due to caregiving challenges

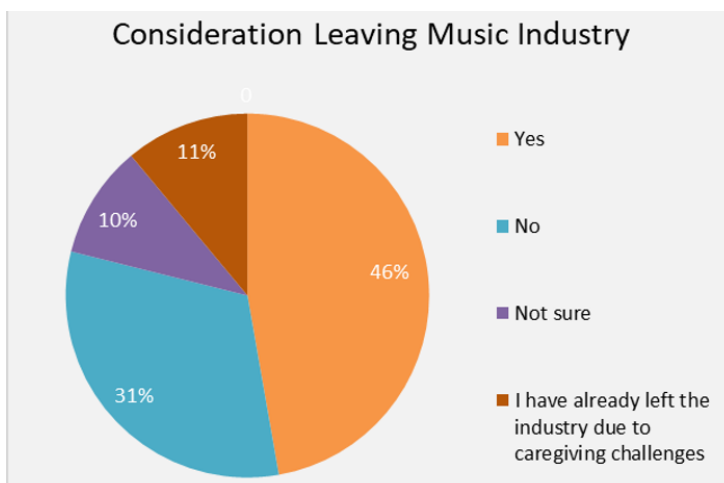


Fig. 8: Considering leaving the music industry (n = 205)

Nearly half of respondents (46%) reported that they have considered leaving the music industry due to challenges related to caregiving. An additional 11% indicated that they have already left the industry for this reason. While 31% of participants stated that they had not considered leaving, another 10% were unsure, suggesting a level of uncertainty and struggle.

Q9. WHAT PROVINCE OR TERRITORY DO YOU RESIDE IN?

- Alberta
- BC
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland & Labrador
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario
- PEI
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Northwest Territories
- Nunavut
- Yukon
- Outside of Canada

Survey respondents represent a broad range of regions across Canada, with a significant concentration based in Ontario (53%). British Columbia followed at 15%, with Alberta and Manitoba each contributing to 7% of responses. Smaller proportions of respondents came from Nova Scotia and Quebec (4% each), and from Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador (2% each). A few respondents were in New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Yukon, or outside of Canada (1% each), while no responses were recorded from the Northwest Territories or Nunavut.

Q10. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS RELATIVE TO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

- Full time
- Part time
- Freelance/contract
- Self-employed/entrepreneur
- Unemployed
- Have left the music industry
- Never worked in the music industry
- Other, please specify

The largest group (41%) identified as working full-time in the industry, while 24% described themselves as self-employed or entrepreneurs. Freelance or contract workers made up 12% of the respondents, and 8% reported working part-time. Another 8% selected "Other", indicating other roles unmentioned. A small portion (4%) reported that they had left the music industry altogether, while only one respondent reported being unemployed.

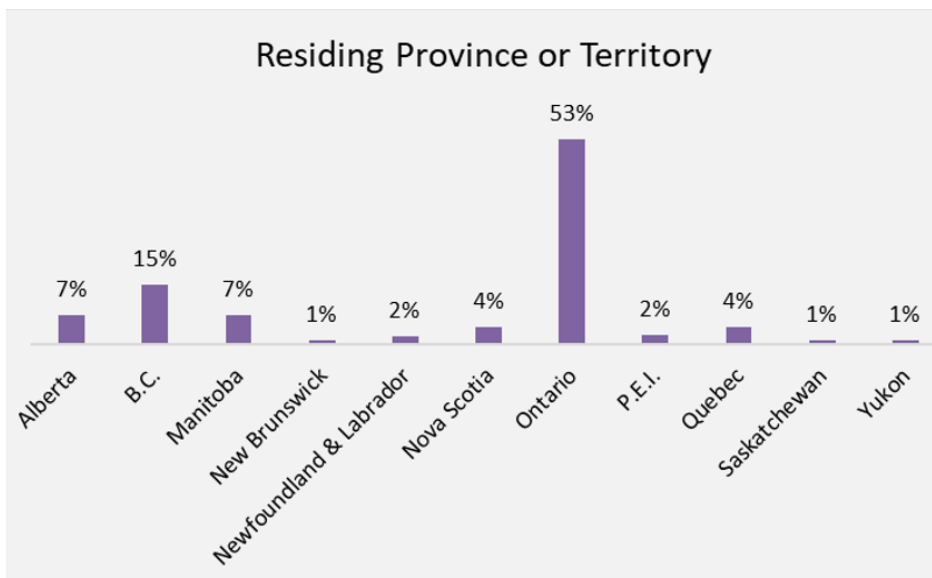


Fig. 9: Residing province or territory (n = 205)

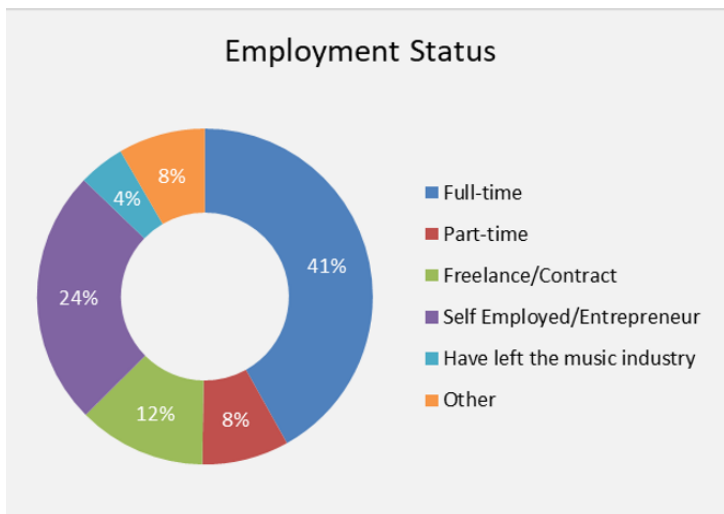


Fig. 10: Employment status relative to the music industry (n = 205)

Q11. WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY OR WHAT TYPE OF COMPANY DO YOU WORK FOR? (Select all that apply)

- Artist (musician, vocalist, songwriter, etc.)
- Technician (technician, engineer, etc.)
- Artist management
- Booking agent
- Collections & Rights Society
- Lawyer/Accountant/Consultant
- Label
- Music industry association
- Live music venue, festival, or live music company
- Publishing
- Promoter
- Publicity/Media
- Other, please specify

Based on the responses, 30% of respondents identified as artists, including musicians, vocalists, and songwriters. Other common roles included positions with record labels (9%), live music venues, festivals or live music companies (8%), and artist management (8%). Music publishing and music industry associations each accounted for 7% of respondents, while publicity/media roles represented 5%. Smaller percentages work as booking agents (4%), members of collections and rights societies (3%), or as lawyers, accountants, or consultants (2%). Additionally, 10% indicated "Other", suggesting a variety of roles unmentioned in the given categories. As with other questions, many respondents (65%) selected more than one role, reflecting the multifaceted nature of careers within the music industry.

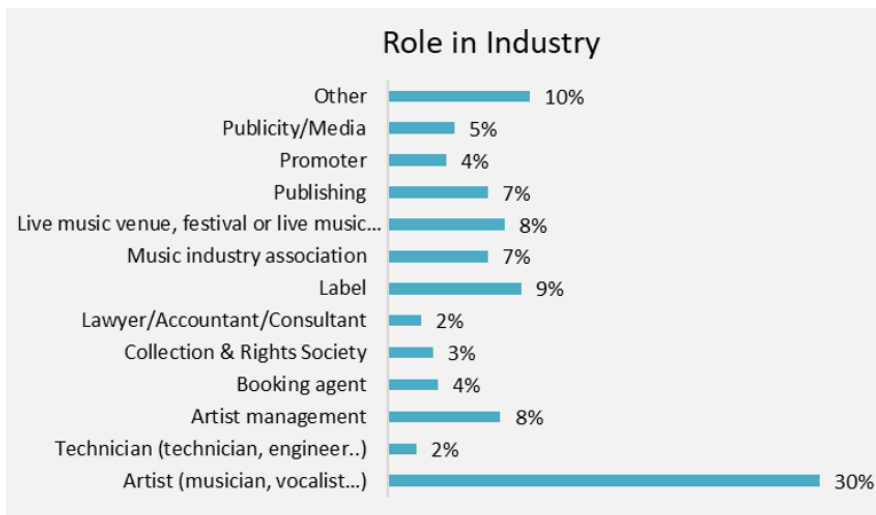


Fig. 11: Role in the music industry (n = 205)

Q12. WHAT IS YOUR AGE GROUP?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over

Most respondents fall within the mid-career age ranges. The largest age group represented in the dataset is 35 to 44 years old (43%). Followed by those aged 45 to 54 (29%), aged 25 to 34 (12%), and those aged 55 to 64 (10%). A smaller portion (3%) are aged 65 or older, and notably, no respondents were under 25 years of age. The data reflects a predominantly experienced and mature demographic within the music industry.

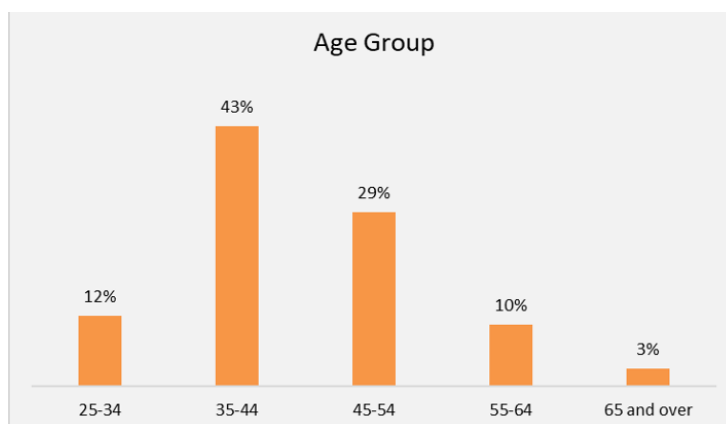


Fig. 12: Age group (n = 205)

Q13A. WHAT IS YOUR GENDER IDENTITY?

- Woman
- Man
- Two-Spirit
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

Most respondents identified as women, making up 85% of the sample. Men accounted for 10% of participants. Smaller proportions identified as non-binary (2%) or two-spirit (less than 1%).

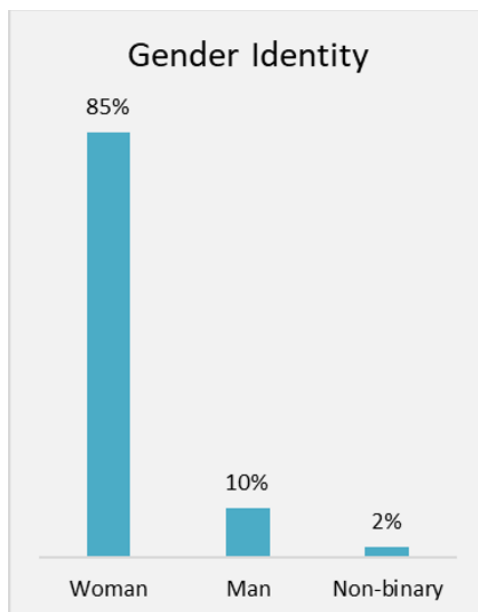


Fig. 13a: Gender identity (n = 205)

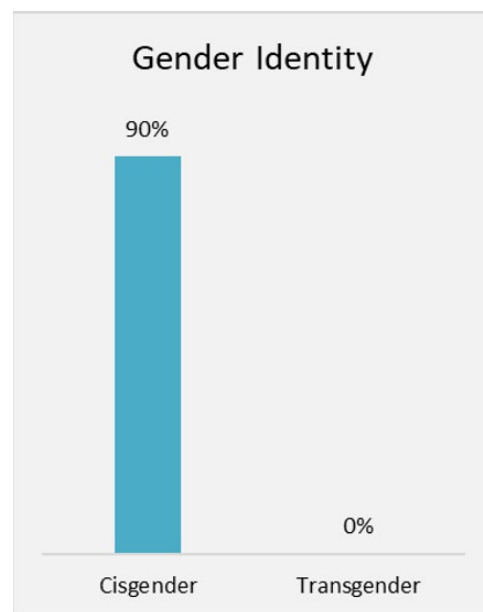


Fig. 13b: Gender identity (n = 205)

Q13B. HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

- Cisgender (A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned at birth)
- Transgender (A person whose gender identity does not align with the sex assigned at birth)
- Prefer not to say

Most respondents (90%) identified as cisgender, indicating their gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. A very small number (less than 1%) identified as transgender, while 9% preferred not to disclose their gender identity details.

Appendix B

FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW SUMMARY NOTES

There were 5 focus groups (37 participants) and 10 interviews. Below are the names of each participant/interviewee.

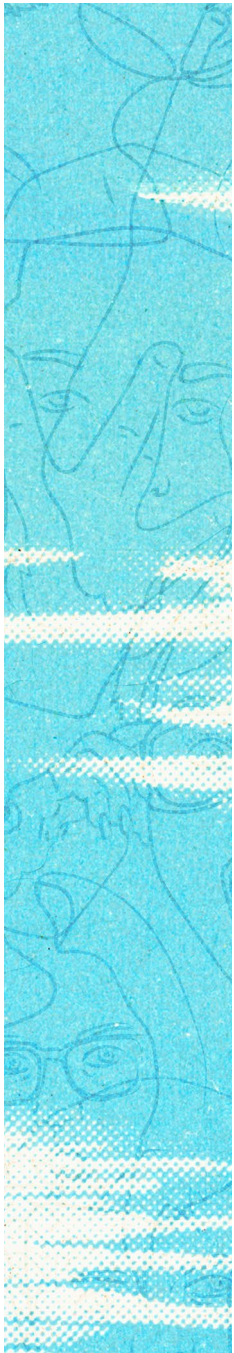
FOCUS GROUPS

COUNTRY (POP.)	DATE	PARTICIPANTS
Folk Music Ontario moderated by Margaret McGuffin	October 5, 2024	25 participants (ON 7, MB 2, BC 2, QC 2, Intl/Other 12)
Balancing Act Webinar moderated by Robyn Stewart	April 10, 2025	Taaylee G, Desiree Dorion, Elise Roller
International Indigenous Music Summit moderated by Margaret McGuffin	June 6, 2025	Daina Zalane, Elena Smelova, Kim Temple, Veronica Johnny
Creative Professionals moderated by Diane Davy	September 23, 2025	Sage McBride, Tara MacLean
Business Professionals moderated by Diane Davy	September 23, 2025	Karma Lacoff Nieoczym, Serena Wasylszyn, Marian Donnelly, Vanessa Kuzina, Pearly Poupponneau

INTERVIEWS

COUNTRY (POP.)	DATE	PARTICIPANTS
MIYA Creative Care	August 18, 2025	Taylor Kurta
Mamas in Music	August 22, 2025	Tiff Randoll
Parenthood in Music	September 2, 2025	Marit Posch
Young Caregivers Association	September 5, 2025	Rebekah Norman
Unison Fund	September 9, 2025	Jennifer Hardy
Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PIPA)	September 9, 2025	Cassie Raine
OMDC (now Ontario Creates)	September 10, 2025	Kristine Murphy
shesaid.so	September 23, 2025	Kayleigh Ramchand, Cristina Lazic
KeyChange	September 24, 2025	Eve Horne

The following highlights significant points from both the focus groups and interviews. The notes are organized within five themes that emerged in our research: improved access to resources, flexible and inclusive work models, structural and financial support, community and peer support networks, and mental health and self-care.



Improved access to resources

- Recent discovery of programs like Level UP!
- Access to resources like meal delivery, therapy, and mental health resources, is essential.
- To improve resources, caregivers must be recognized and visible within the industry.
- There is a lack of resources, time and energy.
- We need more resources to research quality care.
- More awareness of the cause will increase the number of resources and support.
- Using music as a resource can be useful.
- Awareness of Unison as a resource is low.
- Caregivers face isolation, lack of support and there are very few resources, especially for young caregivers.
- Resources should be virtual and accessible.
- Services need to be more inclusive of people with mental disorders - there is a stigma of different disabilities and illnesses.
- Not many resources for DJs in the industry.
- Any resources found go to parenting responsibilities first.

Flexible and inclusive work models

- One participant was dropped by label interest due to being a single mom.
- Limited access to childcare - especially for overnight/late night industry events.
- Normalizing children in music spaces and better accommodation for caregivers.
- Normalization and inclusivity - Indigenous communities offer examples of valuing elders and caregiving.
- Opportunities are missed due to limitations and location.
- Balancing the guilt of leaving behind your work or your children gets you - it needs to be more inclusive.
- Maternity leave was a second thought to many participants to not lose future opportunities or benefits - some forced to due to stress.
- Grants have become more inaccessible, and a lot of people are ineligible because of taking time off.
- Produced a short documentary songwriting with dementia patients - showcases creativity and destigmatizing.
- Music workspace is already very different from a traditional workplace.
- Performing while still being a caregiver requires support at home and financially.
- There is an expectation of business being your life and being accessible 24 hours a day.
- Touring caregivers need to be supported in venues, breast feeding spaces, etc.
- Her company is flexible with her needs, and her husband's company has excellent parental policies.
- Despite knowledge of caregiving responsibilities, work still expects meetings at school to pick up times.
- Everyone benefits when you bring children - promote kid friendly events.
- Most events are in the evenings or at bars.
- Companies could provide childcare with support subsidies for childcare and limit meetings in person.
- Work comes second as it's challenging to get into a workflow with kids.
- Normalization and unification between freelancers and company employees is essential.

Structural and financial support

- There is a lack of institutional funding for touring artists with children.
- Current grant systems are outdated, expecting intensive, fast-paced multi-city tours.
- Slow-touring models are often ineligible for funding.
- Microgrants, royalties, and stipends are needed to cover caregiving needs.
- Finances are a struggle for self-employed, single moms.
- The lack of financial support meant 70-to-80-hour work weeks and being consistently burnt out.
- It's hard to be excited for tours with costs on your mind - the profit is not a lot.
- Royalty checks are no longer sufficient.
- Prince Edward Island (PEI) has great senior support.
- A lot of support for caregivers in the music industry comes from EI.
- Societal opinions of mothers need to change. There are stigmas and judgement.
- Germany is a good example of support - earlier childcare, time off with income as a freelancer.
- Event costs and event times make it difficult to advance a career.
- Taking time away from work often makes it difficult to qualify for funding.

Community and peer networks

- Support systems like family and bandmates played a crucial role in sustaining their career.
- Mothers often receive less community support than fathers in similar positions.
- Asking for help is hard but essential - many are willing, but caregivers need safe spaces to ask.
- Advocacy and education are important - sharing knowledge with your community is vital.
- Many lived with parents or near parents as they were a good support system.
- Partner's finances helped as well as free childcare from family.
- Need a more structured community or group to have these conversations.
- Spending time with family is a form of self-care.
- Parents are a big help in taking care of the children.
- Connection is a good way to support families "for free", as it helps with isolation, reduces stigma, etc.
- To manage, she has a village of family, friends, and great teachers.
- Safe spaces to be heard are essential.
- Moving closer to family helped with chronic pain, anxiety and burnout.
- Main support is her mother - who loses out on money from helping instead of working.
- A lot of grandparents and friend support helps to manage.
- Helpful to have a community who are going through similar things.

Mental health and self-care

- All participants juggle caregiving with careers (rap artist/mother of twins, country artist/mother of two, business owner/artist/mother of two).
- The struggle of "mom guilt" - worrying about being away, missing milestones, and being judged.
- Emotional labour often goes unnoticed, not to mention uncompensated.
- Constant guilt in going out and leaving family.
- Prioritizing both kids and work can be a mental game.
- It can be lonely and hard to feel understood in this industry.
- It's important to take time to prevent burnout.
- Music is powerful, important, and essential in life - therefore, should be monetized.
- Caregivers often just need someone to talk to - they are wise and good problem solvers.
- Caregiving has made them a better leader in knowing how to prioritize time.
- Moms in Music brought out burnout coaches - burnout benefits no one.
- The expectation to drink alcohol makes it difficult to participate - needs to be cut out.
- Considering leaving industry and experience with burnout with no support from colleagues.
- Having kids has bettered her prioritizing and time management - e.g. getting up earlier for time to herself.
- Social capacity after a long day is small.
- Being okay with not finishing tasks and possibly disappointing others.

Appendix C

RESOURCES

AFC, Emergency Financial Aid and Everyday Help - Home - AFC

- Helps Canadian entertainment professionals maintain their health, dignity and ability to work

ADVANCE Canada's Black Music Business Collective

- A community leading the change in developing an infrastructure for the betterment, upliftment and retention of Black people in the music business.

Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA), "Make It Better Mental Health Benefit" - MAKE IT BETTER Mental Health benefit | Canadian Independent Music Association

- Not-for-profit national trade association representing the English-language, Canadian-owned sector of the music industry
- Members are Canadian-owned companies and representatives of Canadian-owned companies involved in every aspect of the music, sound recording and music-related industries
- The program offers confidential, personalized counseling support

Carers Canada, "Supporting Working Caregivers" Webpage - Supporting working caregivers - Carers Canada

- Employer solutions and becoming a caregiver friendly employer
- Provides statistics (7,856,983 caregivers in Canada)

Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings (FACTOR), Programs and Funding - Home - FACTOR Canada

- Provides support to Canadian recording artists and songwriters as well as managers, labels, publishers and event producers through a variety of programs
- Helps with tour and showcase costs, including some childcare expenses

Government of Canada, Canada Caregiver Credit - Canada caregiver credit - Canada.ca

- Tax credit for caregivers of a spouse common-law partner or dependent with a physical or mental impairment, including children, grandchildren, parent, grandparent, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece or nephew
- Amount claimed depends on relationship to the person in care

Lifeline Canada, "The Caregiver's Guide: Tips & Support for Family and Loved Ones" - Complete Guide to Caring for an Elderly Parent | Lifeline Canada

- Understanding caregiving and strategies for routines
- Essential resources and tips
- Recognizing fatigue, building resilience, and taking breaks
- Long distance caregiving, getting help

McMaster University, Free Self-Paced Online Caregiving Essentials Program - Caregiving Essentials Program - McMaster Continuing Education

- Supporting family and informal caregivers
- Offers practical knowledge and skills to care for loved ones while enhancing your own health and wellbeing
- Typically, 8 weeks to complete and will earn a micro credential if 80% score or higher

Music Manitoba, Market Access Fund - Market Access Fund | Manitoba Music

- Member-based association with members from across the music sector
- The Market Access Fund allows for some caregiving costs

The Ontario Caregiver Helpline, Assistance and Resources - Need Assistance? Helpline is Here. - Ontario Caregiver

- Resource for information about programs and support
- Find: home and community care, local support groups, specialized programs
- Confidential, free and available in English and French

The Ontario Caregivers Organization (OCO), Free Employers Guide - Tools for Implementing Supportive Workplace Practices - Ontario Caregiver

- Help support employees who have caregiving responsibilities
- Build awareness and understanding of caregiving in the workplace
- Support managers to support, accommodate and understand caregivers
- Empowering working caregivers and enhancing access to support

Ontario Health at Home, In-Home and Community-Based Care - About Us | Ontario Health at Home

- Collaborates with primary care providers, hospitals, Ontario Health Teams and many other health system partners to support high-quality, integrated care planning and delivery
- Provides access to and referrals to community services, as well as support for mental health and wellbeing

Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PiPA), Balancing Act Survey - Balancing Act Survey 2018 - PiPA

- PiPA's survey investigates the link between caring responsibilities and career progression in the performing arts sector. This Balancing Act survey provides evidence that a shift is needed, as well as some recommendations.

Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publisher of Canada (SOCAN) Foundation, Programs, Funding, Mentorship and Training - Programs - SOCAN Foundation

- SOCAN's stated goal is "to create a workplace and environment that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive, where everyone can be themselves and do their best work."
- The Foundation provides several programs including ones that provide seed funding, mentorship and entrepreneurship training

Unison Fund, Counselling and Emergency Financial Support - Unison Fund

- Specifically provides help to professional music workers in times of hardship (mental, physical, financial, emotional)
- Music workers who have been employed a minimum of 5 consecutive years in the Canadian music industry facing an emergency

Women in Music Canada, Programs for women in the sector - Women in Music

- One of the country's largest music industry associations, provides several programs aimed at elevating, promoting and celebrating women in the sector
- Programs include those focused on mentorship, leadership and entrepreneurship

ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations provided by survey participants (Q7)

Adult Foster Care (AFC) - [Adult Foster Care](#) - [More Care AFC](#)

Ami-Quebec - [Programs & Support](#) - [AMI-Quebec](#)

L'Appui pour les proches aidants - [Contact Caregiver Info](#) - [Support](#)

Balancing Act - [Resources](#) - [Balancing Act](#)

Canada Council for the Arts - [Funding](#) | [Canada Council for the Arts](#)

Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence - [Caregiver Resources](#) - [Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence](#)

Caregivers NS - [Caregivers Nova Scotia](#)

Coastal Health - [Services – Coastal Health](#)

COLOURS OF MAMA - [Community Care](#) | [Como](#)

East Coast Music Association (ECMA) - [Wellness Resources](#) - [East Coast Music Association](#)

Folk Canada - [Folk Canada](#) | [Folk Music Ontario Conference](#)

FACTOR, Funding - [Our Programs](#) - [FACTOR Canada](#)

Government of Quebec - Famille et soutien aux personnes - [Personnes proches aidantes](#) - [Caregiver](#) | [Government of Quebec](#)

GreenShield - [Integrated Health Coverage and Care](#) | [GreenShield](#)

Kidney Foundation of Canada - [Kidney Foundation](#) - [Programs & Services](#)

Manitoba Music, Market Access Fund - [Market Access Fund](#) | [Manitoba Music](#)

Moms in Music - [HOME](#) | [Moms In Music](#)

Music NB - [MID program](#) - [Music-Musique NB](#)

Music NS - [Music Nova Scotia: Women In Music](#) - [Atlantic](#)

Musicaction - [Musicaction](#) | [Encouraging the development of music](#)

MusicCares - [Get Help with MusiCares](#) | [MusiCares.org](#)

My Little Tribe - [My little tribe](#)

Ontario Health at Home - [Ontario Health at Home](#)

PRS For Music Foundation, Keychange - [Keychange](#) - [PRS for Music Foundation](#)

SOCAN - [SOCAN](#)

Unison Fund - [Emergency Financial Support](#) - [Unison Fund](#)

UHN, Home Health Care - [Home Care and Nursing Services](#)

VON, Provincially (Ontario) funded supports - [VON Special Services at Home](#) | [Support and respite for families](#) | [VON Canada](#)

Women In Music Canada (WIMC) - [Women in Music](#) - [Resources](#)

