



Summary: The American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation's [Smokefree Music Cities](#) Project shines a spotlight on the continued need for smokefree environments and workplaces for musicians, entertainers, fans, and hospitality workers. By engaging directly with musicians who are exposed to secondhand smoke and others involved in the music or broader entertainment industry, Smokefree Music Cities creates a network of spokespersons that bring their unique and authentic voices and experiences to expand the dialogue about the hazards of secondhand smoke exposure and the benefits of going smokefree. The goal is to improve health equity for all workers and for those who patronize hospitality and entertainment venues by closing gaps in smokefree workplace protections.

Background: When most people think about workplaces, they think of offices or retail establishments. Given the proliferation and popularity of smokefree restaurants, many may also include these dining establishments in their definition of a workplace. However, bars, clubs, dance halls, casinos, and entertainment venues are workplaces as well as public places - and secondhand smoke is just as hazardous in these environments as it is in an office building. Unfortunately, **37% of the U.S. population continues to be exposed to secondhand smoke, a Group A carcinogen, known to cause cancer in humans.** In fact, exposure to secondhand smoke and smoking are still one of the leading causes of preventable death in the U.S.

Engaging musicians and other hospitality workers to tell their stories is a compelling and powerful tool to communicate the challenges of working in smoke-filled environments. By sharing their stories of how smoke impacts their own health and how it inhibits their ability to perform at their peak level, musicians make abstract concepts like health disparities more relatable and understandable, connecting to audiences on a deeper level beyond what statistics and facts alone can achieve. [This type of storytelling](#) empowers individuals and communities to become agents of change to improve community health.

Successful smokefree campaigns in music cities such as Austin, TX and New Orleans, LA brought fresh new voices to share their stories and garner the support of both the public and decision makers. Their stories put a human face to the issue, and long-standing policies began to change. Building on that momentum, the [Smokefree Music Cities](#) movement continued to grow and found recent success in prominent music cities like **Atlanta, GA** and **Nashville, TN**, with smokefree ordinances passing in each city during 2020 and 2023, respectively.

There is still much work to be done, with music cities like Memphis, TN and Tulsa, OK remaining unprotected and exposing their musicians and audiences to smoke-filled venues every day. In addition, many musicians perform in casinos and major gaming and music cities such as **Biloxi, MS, Atlantic City, NJ, Pittsburg, PA, and Las Vegas, NV** that are not yet smokefree.

Support for Smokefree Air: Recently, Smokefree Music Cities proudly partnered with Sound Music Cities in their nation-wide Music Census, where a survey of music ecosystems in 20+ cities included questions about preference in performing and attending concerts in smokefree environments. ***The response in every city was overwhelmingly in support of smokefree venues.*** From Tulsa, with a preference of 76%, to northeastern TN, who came in over 90% in support, the message was clear: smokefree venues are what people want, and what everyone deserves.

About Us: The American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation (ANR Foundation) is a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit working for more than 40 years to dismantle obstacles to health equity for communities and workforces. Our mission is to ensure everyone, especially those in frontline hospitality jobs, has the right to breathe safe, smokefree air in their workplaces, and earn a living without compromising their health or dignity. We serve as a community-led advocacy organization, supporting disenfranchised workers to strategically build power and create change throughout the country by partnering directly with and providing training, communications support, and advocacy tools to frontline workers. We have a successful history of empowering workers to advocate for their health protections including galvanizing flight attendants to fight for smokefree commercial flights, organizing patrons and service workers around smokefree workplaces, and empowering musicians to demand smokefree venues.

ANR Foundation first embarked on a Smokefree Music Project in 1992 when it partnered with the California Department of Health Services to execute a successful campaign to make California's concert venues 100% smokefree. Local musicians along with bigger name acts such as Linda Ronstadt, Holly Near, Boyz II Men, En Vogue, John Lee Hooker, and Richard Marks provided testimony about the need for smokefree venues. The campaign received a great deal of attention; in fact, MTV reported on ANR Foundation's "Smokefree Music Project." The project continued and expanded to other states. We worked with artists in Austin, TX in the early 2000's; with legends and upcoming artists in New Orleans and Baton Rouge between 2014-2018; with Atlanta Blues artists in 2018; and a diverse group of Nashville artists in 2020-2021. The work in Tennessee continues in several cities including Knoxville and Memphis.

The ANR Foundation partnered with local or statewide music organizations such as Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation, Musicians for a Smokefree Nashville, and the Atlanta Blues Society, and [13 organizations have adopted our smokefree resolution](#). As we continue to grow this movement into new cities, we will identify similar partnerships in music cities where smokefree protections lag behind and build on the successful blueprint that we have created throughout the last decade.

ANRF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and donations are tax deductible.

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