



strategy + support for
musicians creating change

Air Traffic Control

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QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Arabella Advisors, a philanthropic consulting company that helps individuals, families, and institutions be more effective with their giving, compiled this list of questions for evaluating new opportunities and corporations. It is part of an ongoing research project related to artist-focused activism and philanthropy, and is intended to be helpful as musicians think through opportunities such as benefit concerts or partnerships with nonprofits. It helps develop a framework to look holistically at the costs, benefits and mechanics of different options.

Arabella
PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT ADVISORS

Cost

- Time:** How much time is required of the artist? Are there any follow up opportunities or expectations?
If it is a one-time commitment, how well does it work within existing schedules?
- Exclusivity:** Does the opportunity have any expectations in terms of exclusivity?
Does the opportunity conflict with any existing partnerships or relationships?
- Reputation risk:** How will the relationship be marketed publicly?
Does the opportunity have any connections with which the artist does not want to be associated?
Does the artist have credibility within the issue?
Do leaders within the opportunity have credibility within the issue? This is particularly important in the case of responded to disasters and the need for on-the-ground relationships and expertise.

Benefit

- Fit with interests:** Is the opportunity of interest to the artist?
Is the opportunity accessible and of interest to the artist's fan base?
- Compelling ask:** Does the opportunity have an "ask" with which fans can engage?
Does the opportunity provide sufficient background information into the problem being addressed and the rationale to its solution?
If the ask is for money, is it clearly communicated where the money will go and how it will be used?
- Leverage:** Are there ways to leverage existing relationships for the benefit of the opportunity?

Mechanics

Decision-making:	How are decisions made within the partnership? Are all involved aware of this process? Do fans have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making?
Transparency:	If money is being raised for multiple organizations, how is it being divided? How is that division being managed? If contact information is being gathered, how is it being distributed? How will it be used/ how will audience members be engaged in the long-term?
Exit strategy:	Is the opportunity poised to have a lasting impact, even if the artist is no longer involved? If the opportunity is an annual event, how will decisions around continued participation be made and communicated?

Program

Need:	Does the mission serve a specific and expressed need? Is this need a priority for the artist? Does it support the artist's goals in terms of activism and/or audience engagement?
Approach:	Does the solution posed by the organization reflect a deep understanding of its causes? Is it a long-term solution, or an immediate response? Either way, does this reflect the goals of the artist? Does the organization include advocacy as a part of its strategy? Does this reflect the goals of the artist?
Evaluation:	How does the organization measure its own success? How does it use evaluation to hone its programs? How are successes and failures communicated to outside stakeholders?

Leadership

Staff:	Is the leadership strong and do they have the skills needed to bring the organization to its next level of success?
Board:	Do board members have a variety of backgrounds? Are they well suited to provide guidance to the organization? Is there evidence that board members are sufficiently engaged in the governance of the organization? Is the organization fully taking advantage of what board members can offer?
Tie to community:	Does the organization have a systematic way of selecting feedback from/incorporating the views of the community it serves? This can be reflected in staff and board composition, advisory boards, or active stakeholder engagement?

Sustainability

Reputation:	Does the organization have a strong reputation among different stakeholders, e.g. the local community, similar nonprofits, funders, etc.? Has the organization or its leadership received any awards? Has the organization been involved in any controversies?
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Financial stability: Does the organization's revenue consistently exceed its costs?
Does it have a sufficient amount of funding in reserves?
Are its sources of funding diverse and do they include individual, institutional, government, and/or corporate support? If the organization is new or funded by one primary source, does it have plans to diversify?

Air Traffic Control (ATC) exists to help musicians play an effective, unique and vital role in the promotion of social justice. Musicians and managers established ATC five years ago to assemble an experienced and trusted team of leaders, resources and tools that would help them to create more effective social change collaborations with each other and with social justice organizations. As a result, ATC became an artists' air traffic control—one that develops capacity, efficiency, and coordination to produce stronger and more creative social change partnerships. For more information, please go to www.atctower.net.