

<p>Lets continue. it was brought to my attention by a anonymous source that compensation standards in downtown for local musicians has now detracted backwards to a time in our music performance history where "exposure bucks" was the currency for which we were paid for our time and effort to perform. My source a very active musician gave me a run down of what the money climate was like in downtown Napa. However I must say playing for free has always been in my way how about you?</p> <p>Now maybe it is because downtown venue owners believe the flow of visitors will slow down as we approach winter, maybe I say? If you have not noticed Napa is quickly becoming the mega music destination of the North Bay. Out of town musician friends have told me that they are always paid very well. Huh? Another friend of mine whom is plugged into downtown says the commerce is rolling so well very wealthy business operators are moving in. So simply the forecast calls for more cash. With a good boot upwards evolving a mountain of compensation for the efforts of all concerned in downtown. So why do the local musicians take a boot kicking to our wallets guarding our music butts? I can't make the answer easy for you or me and say it is just one thing.</p> <p><i>Here is a number of concerning facts.</i></p> <p>1. Some musicians are hobbyist's, part time percenters with day jobs and the live performance of music is a leisure activity for them. I have heard the many rationals for this such as hey I do this for fun, or it is my hobby and I have dreamed of doing this all my life and now I have a chance. Then there is the most recent slogan, It's never too late. Either, ayether or neither. As an individual you are choosing to follow the Passion for Live Performance Of Music. So if that is the case, once you realize it there are responsibilities to the creed of all musicians and we have traditions. I just offer a humble request that you take into account that there are Musicians in your community that are veteran performers and work music for a living. Please make an attempt to hold our traditions with respect for yourself and others. And you will be smiled upon by grumpy old guy's like me.</p> <p>2. Then the lack of knowledge in how to get a gig. The most important thing to remember is to not let the insecurities of your inexperience overwhelm you and you then back down to accepting a compensation of exposure for your hard work. Offer that you require compensation for your service. If not, pass it up return later.</p>	<p>Regroup and strategize how you can gain the interest of the source that you want to have hire you to perform.</p> <p>3. Most importantly, here is the crux. Napa has a long history of exploitation in the music business and towards musicians. There are so many forms of fraud, and exploitation that has surfaced here it would be futile for me to list as such. The best would be for you to seek me out and have a conversation of my many years and stories of operating as a professional musician in Napa. Understanding that the exploitation in point contributes to the next comment.</p> <p>4. Negative reinforcement. The Napa circle is plagued with this dysfunction. I have learned and studied this problem that exist's in all of the music industry. Yet Napa is chronic. I have talked with my successful friends and acquaintance's in the music business. It is simply played off as gossip. However that is a simple cliché' for a real epidemic problem that create's disunity.</p> <p>It is for example that I talk down another musician or music act that is operating well and being successful. With the idea that I can circumvent their ability to continue to be successful in dominating the opportunities that are available in the music engagements that are offered. Exposing a "negative" to their ability to operate which results in a very detrimental attack on their character, reputation and skill in the music business. As a performing Music Artist. Unfortunately this negative reinforcement has a back slap in that as many tongue's wagging the trash talk about our creed as local musician's, the reputation of all in total is saturated with negative reinforcement. Over my time I have heard in plural that we are worthless no good trash. That is just one of the many examples. In truth there are some musicians that have earned that reputation for their actions. But not the majority of Napa musicians.</p> <p>My friends in the music business offer that there is only one activity that counts for what you are, whom you are and what you do. That is the ability to rehearse your music act, deploy that music act to the stage and effectively entertain the people attending. And the ability to sustain that effort continuously. Most importantly what you have to give musically and what you have to say in your music</p>
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<p>I believe I have overcome this bad habit of negative reinforcement through my many years of performing and the maturity to understand what it is exactly. But it is not an accomplishment of abolishment. But only a continued work as a professional. Because I know that what ultimately accounts for my success is those individuals that I perform for and with. And working towards the success of bringing to the stage my experience as a music artist.</p> <p>5. In Napa we have lost a sense of tradition and unity. In That the experienced musicians work to help the younger musicians coming up. And the younger musicians with tolerance listen. By publication of this article I am here and willing to pass on the standards of Traditions I have learned, know and understand. Just of note I started working at concerts at eleven years old. Began my music career at nineteen years old earning my first dollar in the music business. There was tradition and unity in those days. In today’s Napa Music Scene we have clique’s. Who likes who, whom does not like who and so on and so on, etcetera.... Yes that is a part of negative reinforcement.</p> <p>6. Lastly slogans. Music is just for fun they say. It is a gimmick. Let’s turn on the Radio. I can stream thousands of songs online. There’s Jam sessions and Open Mics. Those are the cliché’ terms I have heard around this town to describe music activities. Not everyone has a in-depth understanding of how important music as an Art is. And why it’s so important. As well, seriously the Live Performance Of Music is sacred to our creed of traditions. For that too is an Art.</p> <p>So many members of our community see music as a personal element in their daily life personally only to them with a limited view. And beyond that no comprehension of the struggle to bring the live performance of music to the stage to play and entertain them. Causing myself now to discuss my recent findings. That there is money in our town that can better add value and development to the cost of performance. In our music industry here in Napa for local musicians. Then too, sustaining that effort financially.</p> <p><i>That means you don’t pay to play you get paid to play. Capiche?</i></p> <p>The recent growth of more opportunities and venues to perform live music has increased. Yet, we are still seeing that the compensation for the Art Of Live Performance of Music for local musicians remains questionably small and falling to playing for free or exposure bucks. Establishing now the system of compensation for local music performers that we saw beginning in 1981. My former mentor and Cowboy Band leader Don James Barnes was the first to call out the Downtown Merchants Association for offering exposure bucks to local music acts.</p>	<p>While DTMA paid premium costs to bands from as close as Vallejo and Sonoma.</p> <p>Don knew from his fathers years of performing with Don’s years of performing that compensation for local music acts was 450\$ to 500\$ per club for a four piece or greater combo band, 250\$ to 300\$ for a Trio, 100\$ to 250\$ for a Solo or a Duo. As well all prices were negotiable for more, not less. In that time importantly local music and musicians also gained the label as the “hokey pokey Napa music scene”. Make note of that please it still exist in the minds and thoughts of others today.</p> <p>Yet, after changes historically to our local music industry were enacted, such as the closing of music in the Tasting Rooms at the Wineries (late 70’s). Then the Big Shutdown by Napa City Administration of venues in Napa Town proper (1978 too and until the arrival of the Specific Plan). Including the closure of music in the park in the late 70’s. These incident’s created a nose dive to the compensation structure for musicians.</p> <p>The competition for performance engagements was so competitive the only result by example was to play for free at the former popular downtown market event. The casuals continued to be the best advantage for compensation through that time. However that too as of today has taken a reduced value from the upper high dive ending with a belly flop.</p> <p>So as I have been approached to offer a publication in this matter I have done some economic research, but here is another thought to consider. Exploitation in our music system for compensation has taken form in the middleman complex activity. Historically one such story gives an example. A local musician became a Booking Agent whom operated a business in booking talent for large amounts of money. For example, 1k, 2k, 3k and larger amounts. We say Big Fish eats Little Fish. The Middleman Complex is where the middle man takes the largest cut in payment for the business activity for the performance. Last time I checked I believe this remains the same today. There are some in the valley today doing the same conning. Operating as a bonafide Booking Agent. Be aware that a booking agency requires State Licensing & Bonding to do so. Ultimately the musician in question failed in the effort of booking.</p> <p>Okay, with those last thoughts being offered at this point lets move on. Why are local musicians in the Napa music business community facing the same continuous economic downturn structures over and over again? And this happens for every new generation of musicians working to get a leg up in the music business here. It is a known fact that in order to be successful in the music business you have to have cash fueling your drive upwards to every next level in the music business. By following the Passion for Live Performance Of Music reaching to the level of</p>
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success as a Pro Musician. That is the formula. Of note moving to a music city center is not always the answer. I will cover that topic in commentary in the future.

With the systematic economic barriers and cultural discriminations followed by generational detachment the local Napa music industry crumbles with every slight change in business combined with the City Administrative actions and decisions. Four generation’s of Napa Musicians have suffered from these political and economical strategies, concepts and plans by the dominant Napa culture. In my conclusion with the publication of Musicians Are Not Vendors; I concluded that our City Administration with the Business community and the community at large, we find individuals that have a shallow perspective of what we are and who we are. They do not see us and our Music creation with music performance as an Art. With that said lets now look at some economical facts that exist today and have existed over these times. That did contribute to detour creating a local music art culture.

The City Of Napa began the Downtown Specific Task Force during the time that I was promoting and producing the Veterans Park Friday Night Concerts beginning in 2004. While a small group of musicians the Wild Rose were encouraged to attend others were not. Finally I was encouraged to attend the Task Force. All the slots for Stake Holders were taken. So in general I was present to gather information and ask or answer questions. This is where the City Administration creates the Downtown Specific Plan and the Entertainment District ultimately important to our profession. I have to mention that music was only represented by Wild Rose 4 to 6 members and myself the Napa Musicians Guild. Again I point out here at that time I had a organization facilitating forty-eight large music concerts in Downtown for free. Seriously no invitation was offered to me the Executive Director of the Guild to come to the Task Force as a stake holder? However the Arts Council was invited and Wild Rose was invited. After a small amount of attendance Wild Rose ceased to attend. I continued on and was able to offer a little insight to the Task Force in concern of Entertainment, Permitting and the essentials to operate a music venue or venture.

From that the City Administration developed the Entertainment District. Where music was permitted with just an administrative application. The City Of Napa wanted to concentrate Entertainment Venue’s and Clubs into a central location. Reducing the amount of Police Responses to Napa locations under Municipal Code Title 9 the Nuisance code. That in turn reduces the Police administrative costs to the City Of Napa. As well the district serves to boost tourism in Napa. So now in 2024 we have arrived. Napa is fast becoming the Music Mecca of the North Bay.

So what kind of economy has grown from all this entertainment development? While I can’t give you exact numbers from music business operators I can contribute what I found from the City Administration financial reports online.

1. Part of the development from the Downtown Specific Plan came the financial generating of the TIDS and the PBIDS. The Property Business Improvement District (PBID) funding. Paying for gateway signs, vehicular way-finding signs and parking signs. Also Public Art Projects. The PBIDS is a Tax that is gathered from the Downtown Businesses and then distributed to Napa Economic Development and The Downtown Merchants Association.

Sums Distributed from TIDS & PBIDS as follows:

A. The TIDS the Tourism Improvement District. Which disperses Grant Funding, developing Creative Spaces for Local Artisans through a group Napa Makes. (note: visual arts).

B. Six months of 2023 Grant Funding 375.000. (TIDs is an assessment on visitor overnight stays governed by a committee which votes on funding applications. Funds range from events to programming like the lighted arts festival, vine trail, street banners and grants, etc.) Make note Musicians are vendors so we not eligible to attend....And it appears under the Brown Act we cannot not attend. Hum?

C. Street Banners Added 140.59 Downtown Signs, Art Projects 2 completed. 2 in progress (no dollar amount reported) thats PBID funding.

D. 25,000 to the Napa County Historical Society? Is that from TIDS distribution or PBIDS? This was a TID funding grant as I found out. The Historical Society submitted a grant request (as all grantees do) the committee reviews and votes on funding.

E. Previous Grant Awards, 65,000 to the Napa Valley Film Festival and 5,000 to the Napa Downtown Association for the Ambassador Program.

The reproted Gross regional product Economic output in 2022: **\$7.39 billion** (This is an economic indicator about the business output in the financial region’s that the City Economic Development tracks.)

So this is the first part of financial facts that I have recovered through current research 2023.

So I have a question for musicians, you just want a gig? Money is not the issue as you say am I right? You are viewing hard facts here. And exposure gigs are not a problem for you? Playing for free? I have seen the PBIDS Budget from the City in 2014. The tax that was being recovered from downtown businesses was 425,000 a business quarter. To a total of 1.7 million dollars that year.

The Tourism Improvement District I have not been able to look at. This is the first time I have knowledge of TIDS. I hope I will be able to report more info in concern of TIDS in the future. Take a minute fellow melody makers, all you singers, pickers and drummers. And contemplate this, please?

The following are the projected sales taxes for the City Of Napa 2023-2024.

- A. Projected Taxable sales 2.06 Billion.
- B. 160 Million Sales Tax Collected.
- C. 20.6 Million share of sales tax revenue.
- D. 269 Million Sales Tax revenue per resident that goes to the City Of Napa.

It appears the City Of Napa has no problem asking for compensation from our tax paying citizens. That includes you and me with everyone else. Keep in mind these are financial projections. There could be more.

So I bring it to the musicians here in Napa. Yes these are projections, really? If you just have to play that badly and you are willing to compromise your passion for performance by accepting any offer for a Gig for what we were paid back in the day, which was 500\$ tops and then dropped to nothing, zero, zip. If you are willing to say yes to a free gig or exposure gig something is wrong. May I add playing as a hobby is not an excuse to play for free. You are contributing to diminished returns. That means nobody gets anything. Maybe it's true happiness is playing in your garage. Until the police show up on a noise complaint. (Make note here recently the Police Department on their website changed the name of the Outdoor Amplified Sound Permit to the term Noise Permit. Really?) The Police are actually responding to a nuisance Municipal Title 9 complaint made to the 911 operator. Think about it? Thats money out of your paid tax dollar to the city. So your paying to have yourself policed for loud music. Sounds like a Catch 22 to me how about you? Just my thought here. The City holds back cash because musicians aren't in the loop for administrative progress, remember we are vendors not stake holders. And then the City charges you to pay a ticket fine for rehearsing your music act in your garage on a Tuesday night. I ask myself ? What would Trapper John and Hawkeye Pierce do?

Let's do the math, Zero compensation you get for the free gig against the 160 million dollar sales tax? Thats **EMBARRASSING**. Should you go into a establishment and you desire to perform there. And you find it difficult to get a paid booking. Leave your card with a message on it saying, please let me know if you have a try out Tuesday? I will come and perform a couple of tunes for you. Or just ask them if they will let you come and play for an hour. But be wise no more than an hour. And if they want you instantly because the crowd liked you, ask to be paid. Or push for a booking. Thats the way you do it. Or as we say audition on a off night. But no more than one hour is my motto.

There is also the Open Mic's to consider, however at least the master Of ceremonies should be paid. The average I have seen is 100\$ and/or exposure bucks is offered for the part timer's event. That person is getting paid to bring y' all to play for free. Consider also that the venue may not have the money. Verify I say. That may be true. Wait, did you buy a dinner paying money while you were at the open mic?

Now we have the General Fund Revenues FY 2024.

- A. Transient Occupancy Tax, 32,779,000.
- B. Sales Tax, 22,558,000.

So what does it all mean? It means that there is money out there that will contribute to the local musicians in they're pursuit of the passion for the live performance of music. It is money that can, if harnessed begin to place local music in a better and greater cultural status as a known art. Not the fiddle playing grasshopper that comes up short when winter blows in. Or the street corner musician shucking and jiving for coinage tips. Yet, street performance can be an Art too. Get that guitar case open and tips will rain. If you choose to apply your skills to it and do it with an artistic perspective and passion. One musician in San Francisco dressed in renaissance costume with guitar performing Bob Dylan tunes with excellent musicianship. Made a lot of money too. Should any of what I have said or given by example not apply to you? Then I complain right here right now. That may denote all local musicians combined in Napa are hobbyist's in the macro view. It feels that way for me for as I stated free gigs keep getting in my way. How about you?

Here is a thought from my experience. I grew up in Honolulu. My mom was the Assistant Bartender at the Palm Tree Inn on Kalakua. The last local bar on the strip. My dad would pick me up from school and drop me with my moms until she went off work. That was four hours of fun for me because I had the run of the strip and I knew every musician in every club and celebrities too, such as the Duke. Honolulu City Administration and businesses cultivated local music in that time. And it thrived as an art. I knew Don Ho personally and could walk into the Barefoot Bar anytime and he would call me by my name Jerry. Experiencing this in a tourist based economic community heightens my knowledge, my sense's, my perceptions, my imagination and my musician substance to what I say next.

With what we are experiencing now, a similarity to a cultural gentrification with a freeway of pro acts crossing over the top of local music, it is time for you to **WAKE UP**. Things must change if the art of local music wants to be a thriving part and a contributing experience to the scene we are finding ourselves in at this present time. There has to be an effort to stop the state of "crumb-ism" that is us competing for a free gig as we have seen for example with the popular Porchfest.

Do not take me the wrong way all music is a benefit to our local culture. But facilitators, operators and the middlemen cannot be the ones that define our own music art and how it operates to follow the passion for the live performance, of that music art. It is way too important for all musicians. Only Napa’s pro music artist’s can do it by contributing to known standards that we all hold in common. But if we are all broke we can’t do it because there is no positive cash flow in our music venture. In conclusion as stated we are the same as other musicians following a pastime for enjoyment. It then becomes a hobby.

So here are some suggestions. These idea’s can work both for Pro Music Artist’s and those Musicians following the pastime of music as a hobby.

1. Do your best to be paid. Make it clear that you should be paid for your performance. Only accept a short audition or a performance at a Open Mic for free.
2. Forget the phrase; sex, drugs and rock n’ roll. While that has existed in the music business, it is not music business. And please stop day dreaming while performing that you see the multitudes of people in the small club as the population of a Day On The Green Concert. You are playing in the pits of the music industry. As we say.
3. The ones before you have experience, skills and knowledge of how to succeed at what you are attempting to do in following your passion for the performance of live music. Do not be detoured by negative reinforcement. Ask questions, talk with them.
4. As musicians we accept that when we stand on stage and represent ourselves as musicians we represent all musicians. Knowing and understanding millions of individuals see all that we do and all that we say in actions, melody and music.
5. Always do your best to conduct yourself in a professional way. Practice your music skills. Be prepared and ready in your performance of the live music. Rehearse your music act and deploy that act to the musicians stage. For all that you have to offer in your music soul. And those of us who see you perform and hear your music, we just want to know what you got.
6. Break a leg I say.

To close it was brought to me by a few local musicians pointing out that the new people in Downtown are not friendly to local musicians. I would have to offer that I have experienced the same. However all of us the local musicians have to consider that we have a bad case of a bad reputation contributed by negative reinforcement. That is the element that I discussed earlier in this commentary.

Re-iteration; However that is a simple cliche’ for a real epidemic problem. It is for example that I talk down another musician or music act that is

operating well and being successful. With the idea that I can circumvent their ability to continue to be successful in dominating the opportunities that are available in the music engagements that are offered. Exposing a “negative” to their ability to operate which results in a very detrimental attack on their character, reputation and skill in the music business. As a performing Music Artist. Unfortunately this negative reinforcement has a back slap in that as many tongue’s wagging the trash talk about our creed as local musician(s), the reputation of all in total is saturated with negative reinforcement. Over my time I have heard in plural that we are worthless no good trash.

There are many factors that contribute to this condition. As I always say there are two grapevines in Napa where the communication is on the grapevine and for the best part it is positive. Then there is the twisted grapevine where bad acts, character assassination, political attacks and general pickiness of a another music artist’s reputation is contained in a thousand or more words to create defamation and slander. And to what end? To get a gig? As the saying goes “do whatever is necessary to get the gig”? The only problem is that there exist this back slap with negative reinforcement as it becomes a perception of all musicians plural in the local music circle. And with reasoning a negative perception is derived from all the negative information associated with..... think? As negative reinforcement continues to win and win again, diminishing the opportunities for us the local music acts. Because the new people in downtown will likely choose to hire music acts from out of town that have no local baggage.

At times in talking with others in our music circle and the general population I have felt as if I am a politician running for a political seat. I offer here personally that I play some dam good guitar! Better than some and worse than others. Frankly speaking some of my peers and community members are/or have been convinced “I am just a grumpy old man whom can’t get a gig”. Maybe thats true at least here in Napa?

Let’s look now at a different vision. Music Art, Live Performance and the Art of Performance adding it’s supporting and age old traditions, spiritual values, saying’s and beliefs. This is where the creditability and musician skill is exposed to audiences and viewers to see what we deliver to the stage. And also for all musicians to experience and view. And grow from the experience. Personally I want to see what you got and I want you to see what I got. With out the ego present.

Given all the above Napa is changing. Downtown has developed more opportunities for live performance of music. And there is money in downtown. Let me say it again, money in downtown. With a continued Entertainment District expanding and maturing. But primarily musicians from out of county are the first selection for music event in downtown by venue owners.

So my prediction came true. That a freeway would be built over local music. As I said back in 2006 that this would happen and local music artists were not ready for the growth of a real pro industry. Here we are now. Equally troubling is the City Administration with downtown business's continuing to exclude professional experienced music artist's from meetings. Those musicians can contribute good idea's to the planning and economic developments for downtown by different business groups. One of those idea's is the growth of local music as an art. Lately, I was excluded from one such group and labelled a "vendor". And vendor's are not stake holders so we cannot attend those meetings, or any meetings for that matter. We have no voice.

Also consider this too, pro musicians bring with them the music culture and the art of that culture. Our music hobbyist they contribute too, but in a different way in that they create a pastime hobby in our music experience. Though it can't be the only specific focus for local music art. All Music Art has to carry the cultivation of live performance of music as an art that establishes renown and acclaim. Creating a professional forum to grow and perfect the activity for those musicians whom are seeking a professional career in music in our community. I once said that local music can be acclaimed in Napa Valley too with all that we have to offer visitors musically and culturally. Because tourist ultimately come to discover and experience the Napa Valley culture. That means myself and you too. We whom follow the Passion for Live Performance of Music.

Exposure bucks, playing and performing for under paid compensation and free gigs is a system of diminished returns. It contributes to the downturns in our local music industry. Eventually and continuously leading only to the momentary memory of past Napa music fame. So it is the same old, same old system that exists and survives only by the hand of City Government and downtown business today. How long will it exist this time? Because when your out of cash jack you can't buy strings. With this commentary I focused on the **BIG PICTURE**. While I myself like to remain unencumbered by peripheral elements that are involved in music business, and getting to the stage. I have given a wide vision here not to criticize any specific individual but educate local musicians with issue's that will effect those opportunities to perform the ART of the Live Performance of Music. For every show that you book and perform at gives to you the vital needed moment to show your music art to a audience that gives back important response that will guide you to your desired musical artistic expression and vision.

I offer to you fellow musicians, do your best to practice good music business and music cultural courtesy. Will The Circle Be Unbroken.

Dalton



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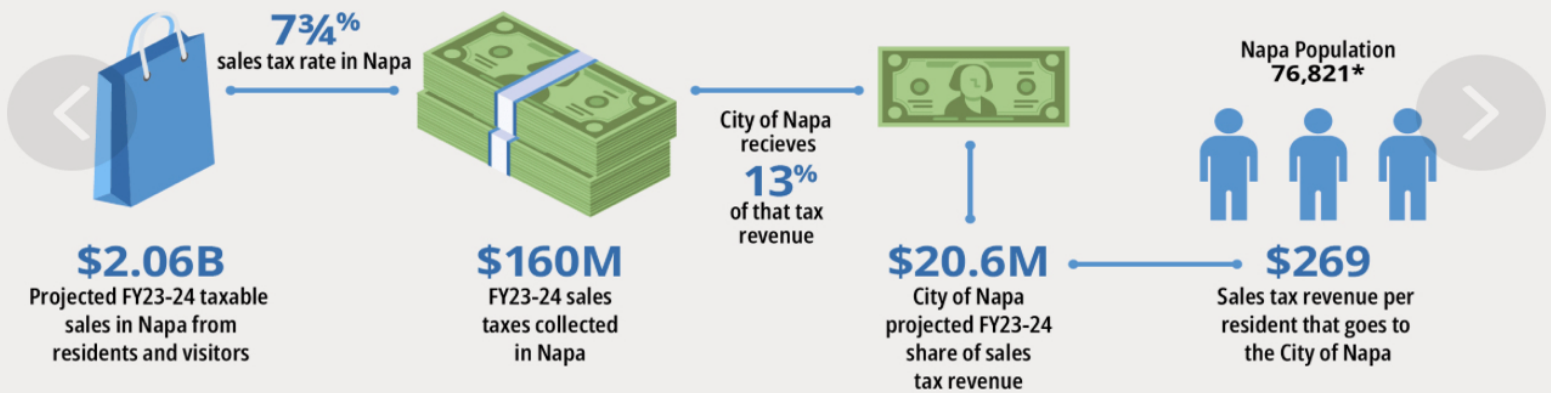
Previous grant awards have ranged from \$5,000-\$200,000. Examples include:

- \$200,000 to the Napa Lighted Arts Festival
- \$25,000 to the Napa County Historical Society to promote historical tourism
- \$65,000 to the Napa Valley Film Festival
- \$5,000 to the Downtown Napa Association for an ambassador program

NAPA RESIDENTS AND THE BUDGET

How much of sales tax from residents and visitors does the city receive?

Updated October 2023



*Population as of 1/1/2023, per California Department of Finance's Price Factor and Population Information Letter, May 2023