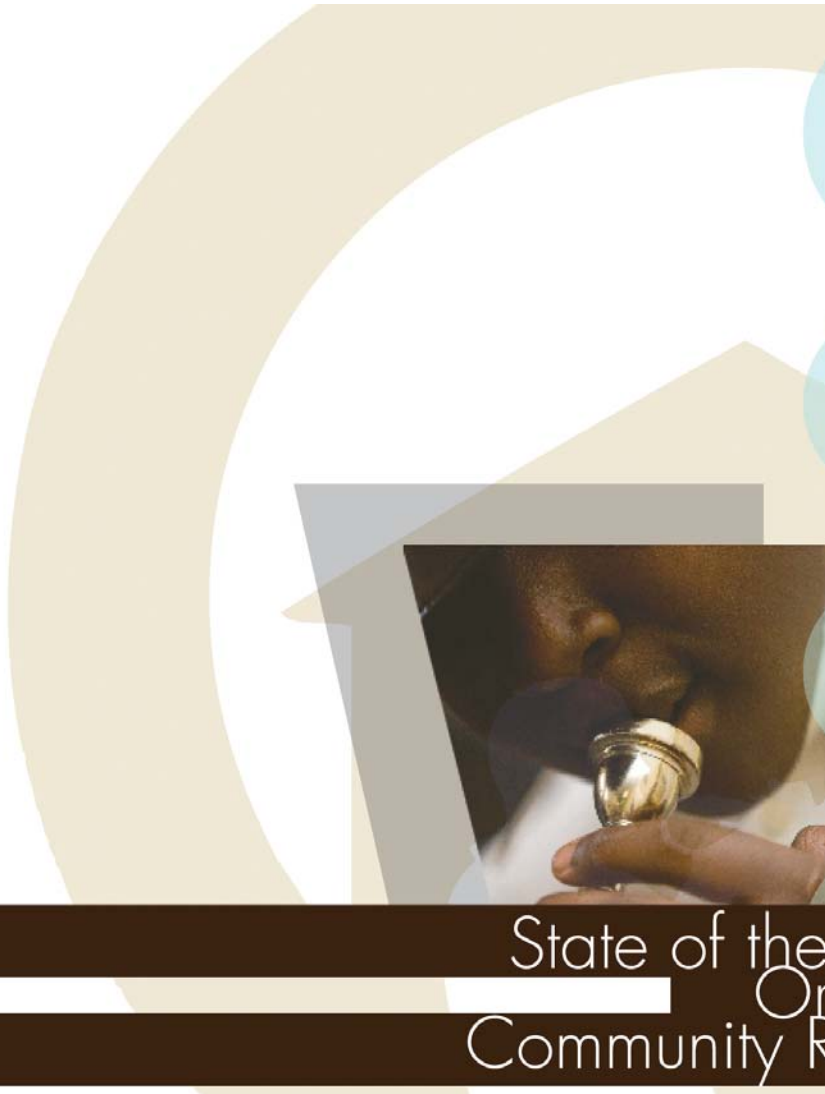




**SWEET HOME**  
NEW ORLEANS



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### Back Cover Images from Left to Right:

- Prince of Wales Social Aid & Pleasure Club  
2006 Photography Credit: Eric Waters
- Prince of Wales Social Aid & Pleasure Club  
Queen Photography Credit: Eric Waters
- SHNO Case Manager Joe Stern with Client  
Troy Turner

### About Sweet Home New Orleans

Sweet Home New Orleans, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is the leading service provider for New Orleans' music community. Our mission is to support the individuals and organizations that perpetuate New Orleans' unique musical and cultural traditions. We help local musicians, Mardi Gras Indians, and Social Aid and Pleasure Club members to get on their feet, get to work, and revitalize New Orleans.

To learn more, please visit  
[www.SweetHomeNewOrleans.org](http://www.SweetHomeNewOrleans.org) or  
give us a call at 504.943.9671.

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Graphic Design and Layout by Kelli Binnings



Photography Credit: Scott Chernis

— Benny Jones, Leader of The Treme Brass Band



Photography Credit: Lynne O'Shea

— New Wave Brass Band

## *About the Report*

### **About the Report**

This is our second annual examination of New Orleans' music community, based on data collected by providing services to its constituents. As of August 29, 2009, we have distributed over \$2,500,000 directly to more than 2,500 of New Orleans' cultural tradition bearers. Sweet Home New Orleans (SHNO) uses this data to pinpoint where our assistance has the greatest impact for our clients, and our ongoing research will inform our responses to the evolving needs of this community.

In addition to updated information about where these artists live and how much they earn, this year's report includes new data about the legal needs of the music community, and about the live music economy from the perspective of local venues. We have included profiles of artists assisted by SHNO to show how city-wide trends have affected individual households and to demonstrate that, despite ongoing challenges, we are making progress.

This Report includes information that might otherwise have remained out of public view. It is intended to be a resource for cultural practitioners, business owners, and decision-makers whose work affects New Orleans' music community. We hope it will improve quantitative understanding of the community's needs, facilitate investment in the cultural economy of the city, and help the men and women who make this art realize the full value of their work.

# Summary of Findings

SHNO serves the approximately 4,500 musicians, Mardi Gras Indians, and Social Aid & Pleasure Club members active in New Orleans prior to the flood of 2005. Our 2008 Report described how we helped tradition bearers return to the metro area, and explored some challenges to the cultural continuity of the city. This year, we are measuring our progress in the face of the Recession as we continue to help revitalize the cultural community. The overall health of the community remains well below its pre-K level, but SHNO's programs have supported incremental recovery during the economic downturn. Here are our key findings:

## The reduced size of audiences paying for live music in New Orleans is one of the largest challenges to our cultural economy

While job losses have leveled off, opportunities for New Orleans musicians to earn a living remain below their pre-flood levels and their cost of living is higher. Venues report significantly fewer visitors paying for live music, and while New Orleanians are going out at a high rate, the city's reduced population makes filling a room more challenging. As clubs are less able to guarantee performance fees, musicians are absorbing the financial risk. Since New Orleans musicians earn most of their income through live performances, the lack of paying audiences has had a significant impact on artists and their families.

## New Orleans tradition bearers are moving back into their Pre-Katrina neighborhoods

Since New Orleans' neighborhoods are the source of the city's culture, SHNO has focused on helping artists return to their pre-Katrina communities by offering relocation, renovation, rental, and mortgage assistance. 80% of the music community has returned to metro New Orleans. Since last year, the number of tradition bearers living in the 8th and 9th wards has jumped 15%, and other heavily-flooded areas also reported gains. This encouraging trend suggests that a significant level of cultural continuity may be attainable even in the hardest-hit neighborhoods.

## With support from SHNO, New Orleans' music community is holding its ground despite the Recession

Opportunities for professional musicians to earn income dropped precipitously after the flood, but the local job market for these artists has stabilized. While this community has suffered additional losses of income from work outside the music industry, the number of gigs per month has held steady in 2009. SHNO clients even report modest gains in performance fees this year. The Recession has slowed the pace of recovery, but has not derailed our progress.

## Based on these findings, SHNO will:

### Emphasize the creation of sustainable revenue streams for artists

Through our Economic Development program, SHNO creates recurring jobs for musicians. Because the market is struggling to support the number of existing performance spaces, SHNO works with established venues to cultivate sustainable audiences. We also help artists develop revenue streams from their intellectual property through pro-bono legal assistance and professional development services. We create opportunities for tradition bearers to support themselves by bringing their art into commerce.

### Continue to provide case management services and financial assistance

New Orleans' cultural economy can only evolve if the city's music community overcomes challenges to securing affordable housing, health care, and other necessities. SHNO case managers connect clients to a variety of resources to help them return to sustainability, and SHNO provides financial assistance for housing, insurance, and other expenses that must be met for these artists to continue to contribute to the city's revitalization.

### Build on our success in supporting the cultural continuity of New Orleans

With help from SHNO, second lines have returned to their pre-flood frequency, and many Social Aid & Pleasure Clubs are growing. Cultural education programs funded by SHNO reached hundreds of young people in the past year. As we support the personal and professional progress of local artists, SHNO also promotes the social function of their art, and the authenticity of indigenous traditions that is so valuable to the city.

