



**Blue Ridge Music Trails Partner Survey
Executive Summary
February 2020
By Magellan Strategy Group**

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) conducted research in early 2020 among its partners associated with the Blue Ridge Music Trails (BRMT), an initiative launched by BRNHA in 2013 to promote the preservation and awareness of traditional music and dance in western North Carolina. These partners include music and dance venues and events of all sizes, regular concert series, local arts organizations, and others within the 29-county BRMT geography. The research was completed in February 2020, prior to disruptions created by the coronavirus pandemic.

Findings from this research indicate traditional music and dance is alive and well in western North Carolina:

- 69% of events and venues that track attendance reported increases for 2019 versus 2018, and 25% said their attendance increased by double digits. Only 8% of events and venues said their attendance had decreased by any amount.
- Among venues and events reporting a rise in attendance, 66% cited more visitors to the area in their audiences as a key driver of the increase. Respondents also said other audiences showed up in bigger numbers as well, including their regular attendees and traditional music enthusiasts.
- 65% of events and venues that track revenue reported increases for 2019, and only 5% of respondents generating revenue reported any decline. (About four in five respondents said they generate at least some revenue annually.)
- Very few events and venues (4%) said their attendance had declined since the BRMT launch in 2013.
- When asked about the greatest barriers that events and venues face in growing audiences for traditional music, respondents said that attracting younger audiences was their top challenge.
- When asked about the impact of the BRMT upon their own organizations, 71% said they believe it has helped them, and 29% said the initiative had aided them significantly. Many cited the benefits provided to traditional music in general and a boost in reputation of their event or venue.
- 81% of respondents believe that the BRMT has also helped their community. Increases in awareness, visitation, attendance, and the overall preservation of traditional music were most often cited as community benefits.