



Dear School Official,

**Congratulations!** The NAMM Foundation has recognized your community for its commitment to music education with a Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) or SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA).

We recognize that this news comes at a time of uncertainty for many districts and schools across the nation. In light of this, we will be nationally announcing and celebrating all BCME and SMMA winners at a later date. In the interim, it is our hope that this bit of good news can further rally and strengthen your music program and your community.

To promote your award during this time, we encourage you to think about the following opportunities or ways to virtually celebrate through social media and your website:

**Announce the Award Designation:** Posting a simple announcement, featuring the award logo (located on page 15) and a few words about the award on a social media platform may be seen by thousands of people. Encourage your community and students to share the post(s) by tagging others who can see and share your post.

**Hold a Virtual Concert:** While instruments may be at school, a variety of online resources are available for you. Check out the Music Educators Creating Online Learning Facebook forum [here](#) for tips and best practices.

**Post Photos:** Posting photos of the music program, award presentation, student performances, musical events, and other music-related opportunities generates excitement for student families and the local community. Consider multiple posts, spaced out over time, to keep the designation top-of-mind.

**Connect with your Students:** Ask your students to record a video answering age-appropriate questions: What is your favorite instrument and why, or for older students, explaining what music means to them. Consider sharing these videos through social media, with proper permissions, of course.

With all social posts, please be sure to include **#BestCommunitiesforMusicEducation**.

We look forward to nationally celebrating your tremendous honor at a later date. In the interim, the NAMM Foundation Public Relations team is here to support your local award efforts.

All the best,

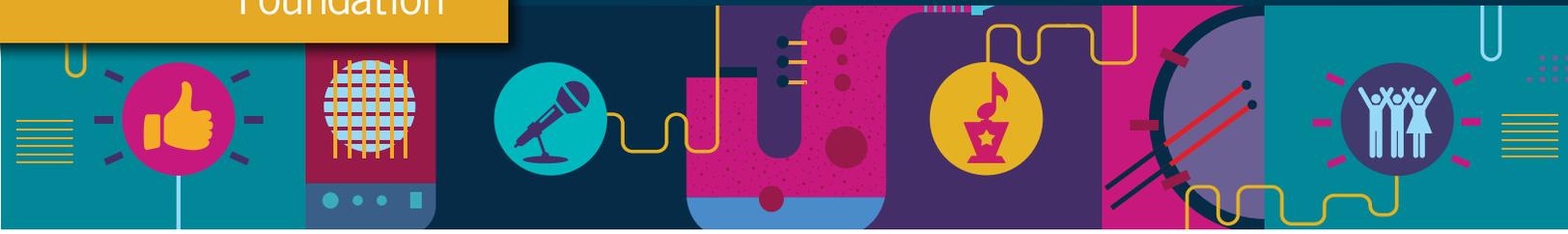


**Chalise Zolezzi**

Director of Public Relations and Social Media

NAMM

[chalisez@namm.org](mailto:chalisez@namm.org)



# 2020 | Best Communities for Music Education and SupportMusic Merit Award

## Promotional Toolkit

**Congratulations!** The NAMM Foundation has recognized your community for its commitment to music education with a Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) or SupportMusic Merit Award (SMMA).

To help you with your award promotion, we are providing materials that you may use to raise the visibility of your music education program and to celebrate this important designation by The NAMM Foundation. If your district or school has a Public Information Officer/Communications department, please share this kit with the appropriate contact.

The information in this promotional toolkit help awarded districts and schools spread the good news about this national recognition and raise the visibility of their music education offerings.

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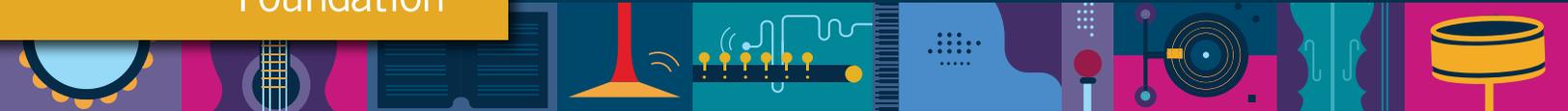
Ways to Engage the Media

## Section 3

Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education

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## Section 1:

### About the BCME Awards Program?

In its 21st year, Best Communities for Music Education is a signature program of The NAMM Foundation that recognizes and celebrates school districts and schools for their support of, and commitment to, music education as well as efforts to assure access to music for all students as part of a well-rounded education.

A group of nationally respected organizations act as advisors for the program including: Americans for the Arts, League of American Orchestras, The Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation, Music for All, Music Teachers National Association, National Guild For Community Arts Education, Yamaha Corporation of America, Young Audiences and Save The Music Foundation.

### What is the difference between the BCME and the SMMA?



The Best Communities for Music Education Award recognizes a *school district* for commitment to and support of music education, while the SupportMusic Merit Award *recognizes an individual school (public, private, parochial or charter)*.

### How was my community or school selected?

Your program was selected based on the application submitted by a representative of your district or school, which provided information about funding, staffing, commitment to standards and access to music instruction. Your data was analyzed statistically and verified via a follow-up audit by researchers at The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

### What does it mean to my community or school that we received the BCME designation?

The award recognizes and celebrates the commitment of school administrators, community leaders, teachers and parents who believe in music education and are working to ensure that it is part of a well-rounded education for all children. Over the 21 years of the survey, this designation has helped school music programs maintain and, in many cases, increase funding for music education programs. The award highlights music as a national education issue and shows what your school or community is doing to provide opportunities for music learning. The award also enables educators to draw attention to music programs that are sometimes overlooked or not fully understood by members of the public beyond the school community.

### About The NAMM Foundation

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit organization supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,400 members around the world. Our mission is to advance active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public service programs. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit [nammfoundation.org](http://nammfoundation.org) to see the full list of BCME and SMMA designees.

## Section 2

### Ways to Engage the Media

Media coverage helps to boost local awareness of music education in your community, potentially increasing support for and appreciation of music programs in schools.

#### 1. Send out the BCME or SMMA press release



**Stand Out:** Customize the press release template (pages 8 & 9) with information specific to your district or school. Be sure to highlight what is unique or new about your music program, such as academic improvements, student or ensemble awards, recognition in county or state honors ensembles, and/or partnerships with local music establishments and/or community organizations. If your district/school has received a BCME designation more than once, be sure to include this information as well. Also, be sure to note the number of students who participate in the music program and emphasize curriculum offerings that engage students.



**Reach Out:** Send the release via email to local newspapers, TV and radio stations, news and education blogs and community websites. Also, consider sending to your local elected officials and other local stakeholders, such as school administrators and board members. If available, work with your district's communications office to reach these outlets.



**Tell a Story:** Consider including a quote from a current student or teacher about the impact that music has had in school and in their own lives or from an alumni who was positively impacted by your music program. Remember that people are drawn to human interest stories, so music student profiles are sure to be a hit.



**Add Visuals:** Include the best photo(s) or a link to video(s) taken of your music program and participants. Be sure to check that your student photo releases are up to date.

#### 2. Create Connections: Invite local media to witness your music program in action



**Make the Media Part of Your Community:** Follow up on your press release by inviting local media to attend and photograph a school concert or your music program's BCME or SMMA certificate presentation. Download and customize the certificate template that is provided in Section 4. Set up interviews with one or two students who exemplify your music program's goals and objectives.



**Send Special Invitations:** For your event, customize the media alert (page 10) to include details about the event. Be sure to list the type of visuals and interview opportunities that the media can capture.



**Enlist Someone to Tell the Story:** Ensure that your spokesperson is well prepared to answer questions about your music program's highlights. Also, consider having an articulate student speak to the media about why music education is important to them.



**Get Media Savvy:** For a broader perspective on the BCME program, members of the media can contact NAMM's Public Relations team, at [publicrelations@namm.org](mailto:publicrelations@namm.org) or by calling **760-304-5713**.

### 3. Maximize your social media outreach

Use social media to communicate the unique aspects of your program to your local community and beyond.



**Announce the Award Designation:** Posting a simple announcement, featuring the award logo (located on page xx) and a few words about the award on a social media platform may be seen by thousands of people. Encourage your community and students to share the post(s) by tagging others who can see and share your post.



**Post Photos:** Posting photos of the music program, award presentation, student performances, musical events and other music-related opportunities generates excitement for student families and the local community. Consider multiple posts, spaced out over time, to keep the designation top-of-mind.



**Video:** Consider creating short testimonials featuring teachers, administrators and students talking about what it means to receive the award, what music means to them generally, and/or what they like most about making music at school. Post on the school/district's social media platforms, such as Instagram or Facebook Live.



**Ask your Students to Participate:** Ask students for their ideas! Imagine what creative musical ideas can be shared through social media posts, videos and images through the eyes of your students.



**Tag Your Community's Leaders:** Whether it's your local elected officials or the band's booster club, tag others in your social media posts to help spread your message. And with all social media posts, please tag NAMM Foundation and NAMM – we'll be on the lookout to share your news!

**Facebook:**  
@NAMMorg  
@NAMMFoundation

**Twitter:**  
@NAMM  
@NAMMFoundation

**Instagram:**  
@NAMMShow  
@NAMMFoundation



OFFICIAL HASHTAG  
**#BestCommunitiesforMusicEducation**



Ideas of ways to share your news:

**Rocketnews** @Rocketnews1 · 3h  
 United ISD's **music education** program receives national recognition - Laredo Morning Times

The USD music program earned the **Best Communities for Music Education** designation from The NAMM Foundation.

The USD music... | rocketnews.com/2019/05/united...

**Northwest ISD** @NorthwestISD · Apr 2, 2019  
 Northwest ISD has been named to the **Best Communities for Music Education** list for the 11th consecutive year! Just 68 Texas school districts were named to the list, and just 623 school districts nationwide were selected.

Northwest ISD named a Best Community for Music Education  
 Northwest ISD has been named to the Best Communities for Music Education list for the 11th straight year.  
 @nisdtx.org

**Springfield SD** @SpringfieldSD · May 28  
 We are honored and humbled to accept this recognition from @SenTimKearney acknowledging Springfield School District as one of the recipients of the 2019 **Best Communities for Music Education** Award.  
 #SSDarts #PrideInAllThings

**PA Department of Education** @PADeptofEd · 2h  
 We're #AProud of the 92 school districts across the state who received the @NAMMFoundation's designation for **Best Communities for Music Education**! Find out which districts were recognized: [media.pa.gov/Pages/Educatio...](https://media.pa.gov/Pages/Educatio...)

**Progressive Music** @ProgMusic · Apr 6  
 Here's our friends from the @BWSDMusicDept celebrating their @NAMMFoundation Best Communities for Music Education designation at the @PMEastate Conference!  
 Cc: @MrsVernoMusic @KathyHawk6 @BWSDHarrisonMS @BWSDuper

Your elected official just might share the great news on their social media accounts too:

### McEachin congratulates school districts for recognition as Best Communities for Music Education

Published Thursday, May 30, 2019, 6:31 am  
 Front Page » Politics » McEachin congratulates school districts for recognition as Best Communities for Music Education  
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 Advertising inquires: [freepress@ntelco.net](mailto:freepress@ntelco.net)

Congressman A. Donald McEachin (VA-04) congratulated two school districts, Henrico County Public Schools and Chesapeake Public Schools, in his congressional district that were recognized as Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

"Exposing children to music is extremely valuable for their development in so many ways," said **Congressman A. Donald McEachin**. "Music has been shown to aid in language development, memory, gross and small motor skills and exposes young people to diverse cultures and communities. Students who experience music performance or appreciation score higher on the SAT."

"I am so pleased and proud that both these school districts are providing our students with this important supplemental learning that will help them succeed. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Chesapeake and Henrico schools on receiving this honor."

**Yvette D. Clarke** @RepYvetteClarke · Nov 6  
 #NY09 was recently ranked as one of the **best communities for music education**, so it's only right that I met with the legendary Herbie Hancock to discuss our shared commitment to uplifting the arts in NYC schools.

Herbie Hancock

**4. Share media coverage with the community**



**Share:** media coverage via newsletters, district-affiliated websites and social media with parents, other teachers, administrators, local politicians and school board members.



**Frame:** news articles and display them prominently throughout the district and/or school and administrative buildings.



**Post:** the BCME or SMMA logo (available on [nammfoundation.org](http://nammfoundation.org)) on all websites and in music department email signatures.



**Celebrate Throughout the Year:** Look for ways to incorporate your award throughout the year by promoting at community festivals and events, websites, with local government offices and other civic opportunities. Past honorees have created community banners to hang in local businesses, light pole flags along a main street and billboards to build civic pride.



**5. Keep the media and community updated on your program**

Continue to share news about your program with your local area media through social media, email updates, a letter to the editor of your local paper, or similar.





Press Release template for SupportMusic Merit Award – **For Individual Schools Only**

[Contact Name]  
Email]



[School Name] Receives National Recognition for Music Education Program

[City, State] – [Date] – [City/Town]’s [School] has been honored with the SupportMusic Merit Award from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

The SupportMusic Merit Award recognizes individual schools that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

To qualify for the SupportMusic Merit Award, [School] answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“Insert quote from school official on WHY music education is important to this school and students,” said School Official. “Insert quote on the impact that receiving this designation will have on school’s music education program.”]

Now in its 21st year, the SupportMusic Merit Award recognizes that [School] is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation guides policy implementation in the states and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was often criticized for an overemphasis on testing - while leaving behind subjects such as music. ESSA recommends music and the arts as essential elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

["Optional student/teacher quote about WHY music education is important."]

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

A 2015 study supported by The NAMM Foundation, “Striking A Chord,” also outlines the overwhelming desire by teachers and parents for music education opportunities for all children as part of the school curriculum.

[Add information about school]

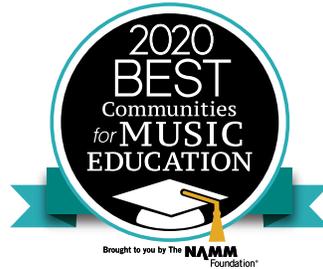
### About The NAMM Foundation

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Press Release Template for Best Communities for Music Education Recipient—**School Districts Only**

[Contact Name]  
Email]



[District]'s Music Education Program Receives National Recognition  
[If your district has won this award multiple times, please note it in the title of the release]

[CITY, STATE] – [Date] – [District] has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

Now in its 21st year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, [District] answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

["Insert quote from school official on how music education is important to this district and its students," said District Official. "Insert quote on the impact that receiving this designation will have on the district's music education program."]

This award recognizes that [District] is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation guides implementation in the states and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was often criticized for an overemphasis on testing-while leaving behind subjects such as music. ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

["Optional student/teacher quote about WHY music education is important."]

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

A 2015 study supported by The NAMM Foundation, "**Striking A Chord**," also outlines the overwhelming desire by teachers and parents for music education opportunities for all children as part of the school curriculum.

[Add information about school district]

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###



## MEDIA ALERT

[NAME of School/District] Recognized as One of the Best in the Nation for Music Education

What: [Concert/Celebration/Press conference/Certificate Presentation] recognizing [name of school/district] for receiving the 2020 SupportMusic Merit Award/Best Communities for Music Education Award from The NAMM Foundation.

The award recognizes the commitment and dedication of [name of School or District] to music and the arts as innovative learning opportunities for a well-rounded education.

Who: [number] students from [name School or after-school program] [insert activity/visual] led by [insert music teacher or administrator's name].

When: [day, date and time]

Where: [Location, Address, City]

Why: [School] has been named one of [number] schools/districts across the nation to be a SupportMusic Merit/Best Communities for Music Education award recipient by The NAMM Foundation. [School/District] demonstrates an unwavering commitment to providing comprehensive music education for all students.

Opportunities for Media: [Interviews with administrators/faculty/staff/students/parents, etc., witness music program in action]

For more information, please contact [Contact Name].

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###



## Section 3

### Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education

#### Child

**Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory.**

*Strait, D.L. and N. Kraus, "Biological impact of auditory expertise across the life span: musicians as a model of auditory learning." Hearing Research, 2013.*

**Researchers found that after two years, children who not only regularly attended music classes, but also actively participated in the class, showed larger improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers.**

*Nina Kraus, director of Northwestern's Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, quoted in Melissa Locker, "This Is How Music Can Change Your Brain," Time, December 16, 2014.*

**Music training leads to greater gains in auditory and motor function when begun in young childhood; by adolescence, the plasticity that characterizes childhood has begun to decline. Nevertheless, our results establish that music training impacts the auditory system even when it is begun in adolescence, suggesting that a modest amount of training begun later in life can affect neural function.**

*Adam T. Tierney, Jennifer Krizman, Nina Kraus, "Music training alters the course of adolescent auditory development," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2015.*

**Research shows that making music changes the brain, and that these brain changes have tangible impacts on listening skills, learning and cognition.**

*(2017). Music, hearing, and education: from the lab to the classroom; quoted in Northwestern University, September/October, 2017.*

**Individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers.**

*(2017). Music, hearing, and education: from the lab to the classroom; quoted in Northwestern University, September/October, 2017.*



## Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education *Continued*

### Teen

**Adolescent-centered studies show that even very basic rhythm abilities, such as tapping to a beat, relate with reading skills, and we have provided initial evidence for how both abilities may rely on common underlying neural mechanisms of sound processing.**

*Tierney, A.T. and N. Kraus, "The ability to tap to a beat relates to cognitive, linguistic, and perceptual skills." Brain and Language, 2013. 124(3): p. 225-231.*

**Students who take music in middle school score significantly higher on algebra assignments in 9th grade than their non-music counterparts.**

*Helmrich, B. H., "Window of opportunity? Adolescence, music, and algebra." Journal of Adolescent Research, 2010. 25 (4).*

### All Ages

**Musical experience strengthens many of the same aspects of brain function that are impaired in individuals with language and learning difficulties, such as the neural timing precision which allows differentiation between speech syllables.**

*Kraus, N. and B. Chandrasekaran, "Music training for the development of auditory skills." Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 2010. 11(8): p. 599-605.*

**Musical expertise is associated with distinctive enhancements in how the nervous system encodes sound (such as stronger representation of harmonic information and greater resilience to noise) that emerge with musical training, even in early childhood**

*Strait, D.L., et al., "Musical training during early childhood enhances the neural encoding of speech in noise." Brain and Language, 2012. 123(3): p. 191-201.*



## Fact Sheet: Benefits of Music Education *Continued*

### All Ages

**Studies show that even a few years of musical training early in life improve how the brain processes sound, and that the benefits of early exposure to music education last well into adulthood, years after the training has ceased.**

*Skoe, E. and N. Kraus, "A little goes a long way: how the adult brain is shaped by musical training in childhood." The Journal of Neuroscience, 2012. 32(34): p. 11507-11510.*

**Researchers found that those who played an instrument for two years showed a stronger "neurophysiological distinction" between certain sounds than children who didn't get the instrumental training. For instance, the music-makers more easily could tell the difference between the words "bill" and "pill," a key skill in learning to read.**

*Skoe, E. & Kraus, N., "A Little Goes a Long Way: How the Adult Brain Is Shaped by Musical Training in Childhood," Journal of Neuroscience, 2012. 32 (34) 11510. DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1949-12.2012*

**Both music and language are complex communication systems, in which basic components are combined into high-order structures in accordance with rules. Whether music was an evolutionary precursor to language or merely a byproduct of cognitive faculties that developed to support language, music is pervasive across human cultures and throughout history.**

*Nina Kraus, Jessica Slater, "Music and language: relations and disconnections," The Human Auditory System: Fundamental Organization and Clinical Disorders, Vol. 29, 3rd Series, 2015.*

**Cross-sectional comparisons of musicians to non-musicians have established a variety of musician enhancements in auditory skills and their neural substrates, extending from enhanced perception and neural encoding of speech, most notably in suboptimal listening conditions, to more proficient auditory working memory and auditory attention.**

*Nina Kraus, Dana L. Strait, "Emergence of biological markers of musicianship with school-based music instruction," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 2015*

**Musical training is thought to improve nervous system function by focusing attention on meaningful acoustic cues, and these improvements in auditory processing cascade to language and cognitive skills.**

*Nina Kraus, Jessica Slater, Elaine C. Thompson, Jane Hornickel, Dana L. Strait, Trent Nicol, Travis White-Schwoch, "Music Enrichment Programs Improve the Neural Encoding of Speech in At-Risk Children," Journal of Neuroscience, September 3, 2014.*

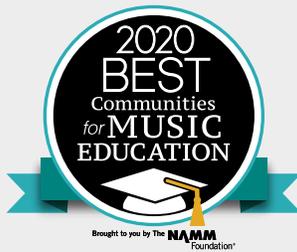
To access artwork for social media, please download here

[Download Marketing Collateral](#)

## Section 4

### Marketing Collateral

Please download marketing templates that can be customized and used to promote your recognition. All materials can be found on The NAMM Foundation website.



- Official 2020 BCME Banner 4'x8' (48"x96")
- Official 2020 BCME Poster 22"x28"
- Official 2020 BCME Poster 11"x17"
- Official 2020 BCME Certificate 8.5"x11"
- Official 2020 BCME Logo



- Official 2020 SMMA Banner 4'x8' (48"x96")
- Official 2020 SMMA Poster 22"x28"
- Official 2020 SMMA Poster 11"x17"
- Official 2020 SMMA Certificate 8.5"x11"
- Official 2020 SMMA Logo

To access artwork for social media, please download here

[Download Marketing Collateral](#)

## Section 4

### Marketing Collateral and Social Media Collateral

Please download social media assets you can post on your social channels, including buttons you can add to your own photos social tiles from NAMM Foundation acknowledging you awards to post on social media channels. All materials can be found on The NAMM Foundation website. Please be sure to tag **#BestCommunitiesForMusicEducation** in your posts



Official 2020 BCME/SMMA Social Media Tiles: 1080x1080 pixels

BCME Tile With Date



BCME Tile Without Date



BCME Animated Tile



BCME Tile With Date



BCME Tile Without Date



SMMA Animated Tile

