



## Does your City Need a Night Manager? October 11, 2022

### DISCUSSION TOPICS

- What challenges is your city facing to need a Night Manager?
- How do you believe a Night Manager can assist?
- What would be the job duties of a Night Manager?
- What are the first priorities in your city that require the most attention?

### SUMMARY

Creation of Night Manager positions and Offices of Nightlife is now the gold standard for progressive cities with active social economies. As Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans and other notable cities join the night governance movement, interest in this concept has spread from cities big to small. Tuesday Forum attendees included: 21 participants from 18 cities, 5 countries and including 5 current Night Managers. The discussion covered the impetus and motivation behind the creation of the position, the role and job duties, and common challenges to overcome.

### IMPETUS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR CREATING A NIGHT MANAGER POSITION

There are four main drivers for establishing a night manager position, per call participants.

**Safety and Security:** In the U.S. and Canada, safety and security are the primary motivators, especially given the post-pandemic surge in gun violence. Helping visitors and residents feel safe in social districts again is seen as a way to draw patrons back to downtowns, especially those still struggling to rebound after COVID.

**Cultural Advocacy:** While safety is also a key motivator in Europe, the desire to protect and promote the culture and economic value of the nighttime economy is the foremost objective of a night manager position. Advocating for not only the activities of socializing at night, but also for the resources needed to make it work.

**Keeping up with the Trends:** Many cities are motivated to adopt the same strategies as other nearby or competing cities so as not to get left behind. Some mayors think it's a cool concept and marker of a progressive city.

**Compatibility and Coexistence:** Addressing quality of life impacts like sound is another key motivator. Tolerance for sound—both day and night—has gone down while arts, culture, events and nightlife are back in action. Sound mitigation is critical to help residents enjoy a high quality of life.

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## HOW DO YOU DEFINE AN OFFICIAL “NIGHT MAYOR/MANAGER”?

A key question brought up is how do you define an official “Night Manager”? While many entities may have a stake in the social economy or directly play a role in nighttime safety or management (e.g. Business Improvement Districts, police, etc.), they may have other priorities or areas of focus. A Nighttime Manager is solely focused on governance and support for the nighttime social economy.

**Where is the position housed?** Andreina Seijas shared research about three existing models for the position:

- **Position within Local Government (e.g. Director of the Office of Nightlife)**

- **Pros** include permanence, funding and ability to access government departments.
- **Cons** include limits to flexibility, nimbleness of what they can advocate for.
- **Examples:** New York City, London, San Francisco. More common in the U.S.

- **Position within an independent foundation or non-profit.**

- **How it works:** Receives public and private funding with a mandate and board to oversee activities. The board is composed of public officials and representatives from the social economy.
- **Pro:** Ability to express what is going on at night without restrictions.
- **Examples:** Amsterdam and Berlin.

- **Hybrid Position: Government and Independent**

- **How it works:** Someone within government is assigned responsibility for nighttime issues. An external commission also exists with stakeholders for safety, harm reduction, etc.
- **Examples:** Paris.

There is no “one size fits all” model for nighttime governance. Seijas cautioned that each position must be aligned with the political reality and structure of each city, as well as the priorities and motivations for why the position is needed.

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## ROLE OF THE NIGHT MANAGER

The role of a Night Manager varies based on where it is housed. Key aspects of their role include the following.

**Advocacy:** There is often a lack of representation for nightlife stakeholders to advocate for their needs to the city. A Night Manager can serve as a representative to speak on behalf of nightlife stakeholders re: systemic changes needed. They also help shift the tone of city government towards nightlife from tolerance to support and advocacy.

**Liaison/Conduit to the City:** Night Managers may serve as a conduit to connect venue operators to the appropriate city department for services and resources. They may report on infrastructure that is broken or processes in need of fixing to the right department and follow through to ensure implementation.

**Mediation:** Night Managers can play a role in facilitating conflict resolution between the government, hospitality business operators and residents.

**Boots on the Ground to Stay on Top of Trends:** Having a physical presence in the nighttime economy during its peak operational hours can help identify potential issues before they escalate. Yet city departments are rarely out at night besides police or other enforcement agencies.

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## **CHALLENGES**

### **Permanence**

Positions based in e.g. a Mayor's Office of Nightlife risk a lack of sustainability with political turnover. London is addressing this issue by creating legislation to make the position permanent.

### **Getting Buy-in on the Position**

Current Night Managers shared the difficulties of convincing city government to create the position. Misconceptions abound about what a Night Manager does. Elevating the profile of the nighttime economy is a key component of achieving buy-in, as this is an industry segment not often valued or recognized.