

# Agenda

## **2025 National Conference Agenda –Executive Directors, Groups 7-8**

*All times below are Mountain Time. Agenda content subject to change.*

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The following agenda describes sessions specifically designed for the above-mentioned constituents. For a full listings of Conference events and larger sessions, please visit <https://leagueconference.org/full-schedule>.

### **Wednesday, June 11, 2025**

**8:00am-12:00pm**      [Tech Fair](#)

**1:00pm-2:30pm**      **Constituency Meeting Block 1**

**1:00pm-1:30pm**      **Welcome and Introductions**

Welcome all! We look forward to getting to know each other a bit, and welcome first-time Conference attendees among the group.

*Facilitator: **Libby Watson**, Executive Director, Adrian Symphony Orchestra*

**1:30pm-2:30pm**      **From Small Donations to Major Gifts: Nurturing and Asking Every Level of Supporter**

This workshop will cover effective prospecting, cultivation, and solicitation strategies for donors of all sizes, and explore why gifts both large and small are essential for a sustainable and effective development program. Learn strategies to "get to the ask" more quickly, overcome objections, and position your organization for transformative gifts.

*Speaker: **Amberlie Phillips**, Partner, Pathway Group*

**6:00pm**      **Optional Group Dinner at [Salt and Olive](#)**

**[RSVP no later than June 6](#) if interested and [email Najean](#) with questions!**

### **Thursday, June 12, 2025**

**3:30pm-5:30pm**      **Constituency Meeting Block 2**

**3:30pm-4:00pm**      **Developing a Group 7/8 Working Board**

Sammy Johnson-Helms will share her experience with developing the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra Board since she joined the organization in 2020. The presentation will cover how they identify potential board members based on skills and community connections, expectations and responsibilities of board members, onboarding process for new members, and board team management.

*Speaker: **Dr. Samantha Johnson-Helms**, Executive Director, Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra*

4:00pm-5:00pm

### **Planned Giving Simplified**

You likely know you need a more robust planned giving program. Yet, like most organizations, you may struggle due to competing priorities and limited resources. RSC Associates has developed a simple, reliable approach to guide you step by step. Participants will receive a checklist of activities that can be implemented immediately and align with your current fundraising strategies.

You'll leave the session confident and ready to use this unique philanthropic tool to accelerate your fundraising growth.

*Speaker: **Catherine Heitz New**, Chief Executive Officer, RSC Associates*

5:00pm-5:30pm

### **Hacks for Small Budget Orchestras**

Small budget orchestras are admired for being nimble and responsive, but with little support we have to get creative, smart, and frugal about taking care of business. Larry Heidel will share some of the most effective and popular time-saving hacks he's come across, and the group will be invited to share what else they recommend. An updated resource list will be shared with participants after Conference.

*Speaker: **Larry Heidel**, Executive Director, Whidbey's Saratoga Orchestra*

## **Friday, June 13, 2025**

10:15am-11:45am

### **Constituency Meeting Block 3**

10:15am-10:45am

### **Developing an Endowment**

Why worry about your budget? This session will cover strategies on how to develop your endowment, so you don't have to worry about grants, federal or state funding, or even ticket sales. Learn how to work on donor cultivation and create an environment of giving to your organization.

*Speaker: **Douglas Farwell**, Executive Director, Valdosta Symphony Orchestra*

10:45am-11:25am     **Marketing – Group Discussion**

Come ready to brainstorm, share insights, and leave with fresh ideas that you can immediately apply to your orchestra's marketing efforts! In this session, we'll explore innovative strategies to help orchestras connect with new audiences, engage existing patrons, and build a lasting community around their music. Drawing inspiration from Seth Godin's *This is Marketing*, we'll discuss key principles like creating remarkable experiences, building tribes, and understanding that marketing is about connection—not just selling.

*Facilitator: **Libby Watson**, Executive Director, Adrian Symphony Orchestra*

11:25am-11:45am     **Comparing Notes, Looking Ahead**

As we leave Conference, what will we choose to take with us? How do we stay connected and energized by what we've learned? We will identify strategies to keep the momentum on our path and deepen relationships that will fulfill us as we return home.

*Facilitators: **Libby Watson**, Executive Director, Adrian Symphony Orchestra; **Rachel Perry**, Executive Director, Auburn Symphony Orchestra*

**Notice:** It is important to keep in mind antitrust rules governing competition that apply to this group discussion. While the agenda for this group includes discussion of a variety of issues that are crucial to orchestras' planning and strategies, the goal is not to agree on a single approach to these issues. With the benefit of analysis and discussion, each orchestra will be able to decide independently what course of action is best for its own organization. We ask you to avoid comments that relate to your orchestra's current or future plans for *ticket or event pricing (actual ticket prices, discount amounts), bargaining (including collective bargaining agreements or with vendors), or compensation.*