

## Public Value Self-Survey

How deeply woven into the fabric of your community would people outside your orchestra say it is? Shrinking resources are forcing donors, policy makers and community leaders to ask these and other tough questions about the public value of orchestras. This brief Self-Survey is designed to help orchestras think and begin conversations about their role in community and public value. It consists of a series of questions that provoke discussion of an orchestra's artistic, civic, and educational profile and that prompt actions to build strength in the community. The questions were developed in close consultation with representatives from more than 100 orchestras and with experts from related fields.

### A Three-Step Process

**Step One** Read and rate the "indicators of progress." (*Can be done individually in advance, with scores tallied before a group discussion. Be sure everyone agrees on the meaning of terms like "accessibility" and "community."*)

**Step Two** Reflect on your scores. (*Dividing into three small groups, each taking one of the sections for 20 minutes, can help cover all the areas in one meeting. The groups can then report back to the whole.*)

**Step Three** Determine next steps.

### Step One: Read and rate indicators of progress

As a first step, read and rate the statements below and decide which best describes your orchestra's current status. An indicator describes a particular level of civic engagement. Circle where you think you are for each of the indicators. Remember, not agreeing about a particular indicator is an opportunity to clarify, dispel misconceptions and communicate. Once you have completed this process, take a look at the strengths, as well as areas of challenge and opportunity. This process is designed as a starting point – a catalyst for discussion to help your orchestra strategize ways of further developing your work to achieve your goals on the road to civic engagement and public value.

Read and rate the statements below. For each item, select one number on the scale.

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**Public Perception**

The individual members of the orchestra family (staff, board, musicians, music director, and volunteers) are viewed as a positive force in the life of the community.

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

The orchestra is regarded in the press and media as relevant and community-conscious.

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

Significant campaigns promoting the community feature the orchestra as a valuable asset (including trade and tourism, corporate recruiting campaigns, and Chamber of Commerce brochures.)

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

The orchestra is perceived as a leadership organization in the community.

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

The orchestra is seen as an excellent steward of the public trust by achieving the highest standards of nonprofit governance, fiscal health, and transparency.

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

Subtotal Score \_\_\_\_\_

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**Educational, Community and Artistic Profile**

It is understood that the orchestra's programming and repertoire take into account the makeup of its community.

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

The orchestra is known to connect to community ensembles and musicians (including non-professionals).

(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)

# League of American Orchestras

Strategic partnerships are recognized as serving a diverse public.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

The orchestra is perceived to be closely connected to families and children.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

The orchestra is viewed as an essential partner in the education of the community's children.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

The orchestra is recognized as providing opportunities for universal access and true engagement.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

Major community celebrations and commemorations include the orchestra in a centerpiece role.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

*Subtotal Score* \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Civic Role**

The mayor, city council, and other government representatives of your city and state endorse and support your orchestra.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

It is recognized that community needs are served by the orchestra.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

The orchestra is seen as an authentically diverse institution—onstage, on the staff, in the volunteer corps and on the board—and serves a truly diverse public.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

Major individual donors provide leadership in promoting the community's investment in its orchestra.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

# League of American Orchestras

Local foundations and corporations see the orchestra as a well-run, well-governed institution, and are generous with financial support and other resources.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

The orchestra's board is known to be an influential board in the community.

*(Not at all) 1.....2.....3.....4 (Most definitely)*

*Subtotal Score* \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total Score for All Three Categories** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Scoring Notes

*The following notes are included to provide some general feedback on your current level of civic engagement.*

### **If you score mostly ones:** "Beginning Phase"

You clearly have work to do in the civic realm. Consider yourself at the beginning of engaging and involving your community. Think about how you might go about changing your relationship to your community.

### **If you score mostly twos:** "On the way"

There is some evidence that you have taken steps to engage your community but there is still a lot of work to do. Who from your community should you invite for a conversation that will assist you in learning about your orchestra's standing in the community? What are some other concrete steps that you can take to deepen your engagement with community?

### **If you score mostly threes:** "Promising practices"

Congratulations, you are well on the way to developing meaningful relationships with your community and have some promising practices to back up your claims.

### **If you score mostly fours:** "Highly accomplished"

Congratulations, you are doing extraordinary work in civic engagement! And, what could you do more and better?

## Step Two: Reflect on your scores

Using individual and/or aggregate scores for the basis of your conversation, discuss the following questions with staff, board and/or community members:

- What have we learned as a result of this survey?
- Where are we now in terms of community engagement?
- As illustrated in the League's Public Value Message Framework, the public expects orchestras to authentically demonstrate four key qualities. Authenticity is essential, since claiming to provide public value without actually producing it sets public perception further back.
  - Which among the four areas does our orchestra currently best embody? Which areas need further development before our orchestra can lay claim to them?
  - Which areas are most important to those we most urgently need to convince of our public value?

## Step Three: Determine next steps

- What are the first steps we will take to make this work systemic across our organization? Who is responsible for acting on these commitments?
- Who are the internal and external stakeholders that should be engaged in our next steps?
- How will we identify the first-person stories and data points that illustrate the public value our orchestra conveys? (*Please refer to the Public Value Message Framework and Data Template in the League's Public Value Toolkit*)
- How will board members cultivate influential spokespeople outside of our orchestra who could be prepared to make the case for our public value?

This Self-Survey is an abridged version of the League's more comprehensive civic assessment resource. For a deeper dive into community assessment, we strongly recommend that you use the League's complete free tool at [americanorchestras.org](https://americanorchestras.org) along with other helpful resources, including free consulting and podcasts.