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# League of American Orchestras

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## The League of American Orchestras: A Brief for Trustees of Member Orchestras

**“The League connects us, strengthening our community to leverage our collective power to learn from one another, to speak with one voice, and to advance the artists, the art form, and the organizations that bring the orchestral experience to nearly 25 million Americans each year.”**

Douglas M. Hagerman, Board Chair, League of American Orchestras;  
Past Chair, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra

Your orchestra is part of a vibrant community of 1,800 organizations and individuals across North America that belong to the League of American Orchestras—the only national organization dedicated to orchestras. Our diverse membership runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love orchestral music. And we thank you for being one of the nearly 9,000 orchestra trustees across the country.

Founded in 1942, the League helps orchestras acknowledge and address the most critical issues head on: leading in times of rapid and profound change, responding to changing audience patterns and tastes, understanding and adapting business models and practices, and deepening relationships with communities.

Led by President and CEO Simon Woods, the work of the League is both broad and deep. Its many activities can be grouped into four categories:

- [Strengthening Leadership](#)
- [Generating Knowledge](#)
- [Creating and Communicating Public Value](#)
- [Informing and Connecting the Field](#)

In our 2020-21 programming, we are increasing ways for orchestra trustees to engage through new quarterly online meetings as well our League 360 online discussion groups and increased digital learning webinars. These activities focus on helping our members deal with the current crises in the field.

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## SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK

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### Strengthening Leadership

- **Noteboom Governance Center**—Offerings for trustees of member orchestras include a governance handbook, a music director search handbook, webinars and videos, and more.
- **Seminars and Digital Learning**—Content areas range from fundamentals of orchestra management and best practices in governance to achieving long-term fiscal health and building strategic community partnerships.
- **National Conference**—1,000+ orchestra leaders, administrators, trustees, volunteers, and musicians come together annually to learn about and test new ideas, solve problems, acquire new skills, and build networks.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Work**—Convenings, working groups, research, an online resource center, and more to help orchestras become more inclusive and representative of the communities they serve.
- **Regranting Programs**—the League serves as a source of grant funding for member orchestras through competitive application programs.
- **Management Talent Development**—typically in person and online as possible, the League provides leadership support to orchestra managers and future orchestra managers through our Mid-Winter Managers' Meetings, Emerging Leaders Program, and Essentials of Orchestra Management program.
- **And More**—The Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview ... Women Composer Readings and Commissions ...

### Generating Knowledge

- **Knowledge Center**—Fielding hundreds of inquiries per year, the League's Knowledge Center staff provide individualized data analyses, studies, and resources to orchestras, as well as one-on-one mentoring and advice to all League constituents on industry practices. Center staff also conduct, analyze, and disseminate:
  - **Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR)**—Collects detailed, comprehensive financial and operating data for comparative benchmarking and analysis.
  - **Administrative Staff Salary and Benefits Report Survey**—Represents the most current data available for administrative, artistic, operations, and other support personnel.
  - **And More**—*Orchestra Facts: 2006-2014 ... Reimagining the Orchestra Subscription Model ... Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field ... Forty Years of Fellowships: A Study of Orchestras' Efforts to Include African American and Latino Musicians ...*

## Creating and Communicating Public Value

- **Media Relations**—We represent the field through proactive outreach to national media outlets—print, broadcast, and digital—helping to tell the stories of orchestras nationwide. We also respond to dozens of media inquiries annually.
- **Public Value Project**—The project includes a self-survey for orchestra boards; a data template, message points, and storytelling guidelines; and analytical maps that provide orchestras with a visual representation of the number and variety of organizations they engage to serve their communities.
- **Advocacy**—Through our Washington D.C. office, the League represents orchestras' interests before Congress, federal agencies, and the White House, providing policy makers with compelling, coordinated information about the public value of orchestras and the music they perform. The League is a national leader in a range of federal policy areas, including arts funding, education, visas for foreign guest artists, cultural exchange, and nonprofit tax and charitable giving.

## Informing and Connecting the Field

- **A Lifeline for Technical Assistance**—The League has developed unique expertise to help the people who make the concerts happen. Orchestras call on us more than 400 times a year for one-to-one assistance with the visas they need for guest performers, permits required for crossing borders with musical instruments, and resolutions to challenging airline carry-on policies. The League offers specialized guidance on these and other areas.
- **Symphony Magazine**—The League's award-winning quarterly magazine reports on the critical issues, trends, personalities, and developments of the orchestra world.
- **The Hub**—The League's online news site aggregates the latest thinking, breaking news, and information about the orchestra community from a wide variety of sources in a daily newsletter (available on demand) and through a bi-weekly e-newsletter.
- **League 360**—The League facilitates a variety of online discussions for peer groups of board members, managers, conductors, volunteers, youth orchestra leaders, librarians, and more.

## HOW CAN WE HELP? CONNECT WITH US TO LEARN MORE.

**Find answers to questions** and guidance on almost any aspect of orchestra governance and management on our website, [americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org), or by **calling Member Services at 646-822-4010**. Our staff will be happy to help you find the answers and information that you seek.

Make sure you are receiving a subscription to the quarterly, award-winning ***Symphony magazine***. If you aren't receiving it, contact your executive director or email us at [member@americanorchestras.org](mailto:member@americanorchestras.org) to see if you qualify for a free subscription. Most trustees of member orchestras are eligible.

Join us for our **National Conference**—The only annual gathering of its kind, with special sessions for trustees of member orchestras. Learn more at [americanorchestras.org/nextconference](http://americanorchestras.org/nextconference).

Engage with us on **social media**—on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

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**Mission:** To advance the experience of orchestral music, support the people and organizations that create it, and champion the contributions they make to the health and vibrancy of communities.

**Vision:** The orchestral experience is shared by all and supported by artistically vibrant, robust, and civically engaged organizations, and the League is an indispensable leader, resource, and voice for the orchestra community and its value to the public.

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