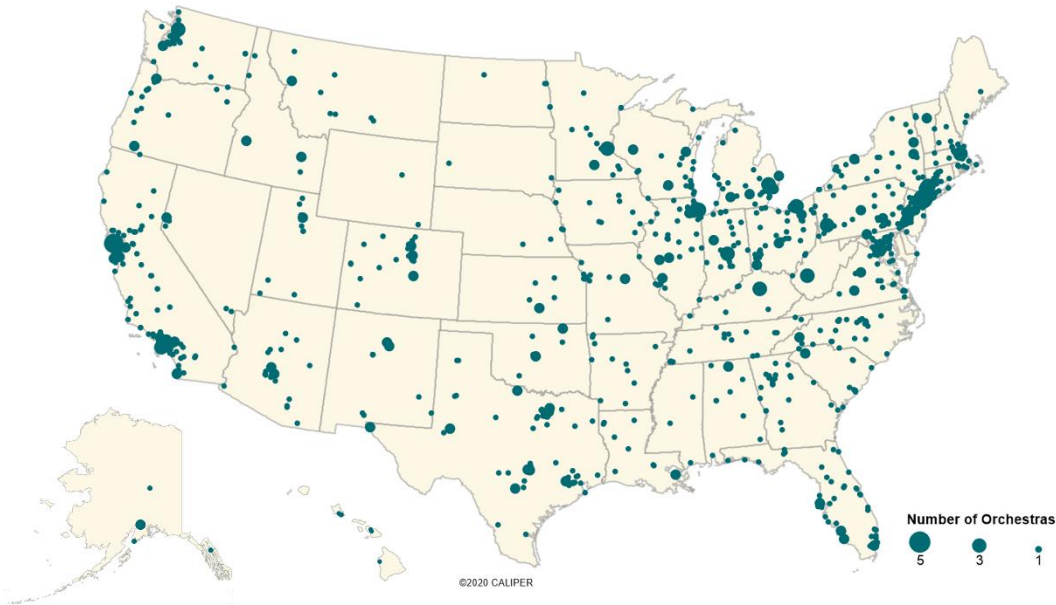


Orchestras at a Glance

September 2022

Orchestras serve communities large and small

The approximately 1,600 professional, community, and youth orchestras in the U.S. exist in all 50 states and perform in virtually every community.¹ Orchestras' annual budgets range from less than \$30,000 to more than \$100 million; two-thirds of all orchestras have budgets under \$300,000.²



The map depicts the 1,224 orchestras identified in an analysis of IRS, DataArts, and Orchestra Statistical Report data from fiscal year 2014

Orchestras are a vital part of America's musical landscape and civic life

America is brimming with extraordinary musicians, live concerts, and orchestras as unique as the communities they serve. Orchestral musicmaking is flourishing in our country, encouraging creativity and bringing people together to share the experience of live music, as orchestras implement new strategies to diversify participation in the art form. In 2017, adult orchestras alone offered more than 25,800 performances – of which 29% were free of charge – and reached more than 29 million people. Orchestras fuel local economies, attract new business development, educate young people, and—through the power of music—unite individuals and cultures in times of public celebration and healing.¹

¹ Estimate based on the 138 U.S. orchestras completing the League's Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR) survey for 2017. Note: youth orchestras are included in the numbers of musicians and orchestras

² League of American Orchestras, *Orchestra Facts: 2006-2014*

Orchestras are significant contributors to the creative workforce and fiscal health of communities

Orchestra expenses totaled more than \$2.1 billion in 2017. Orchestras' economic impact far exceeds that amount as orchestras create jobs, engage in commerce with local businesses, and spur local expenditures on related goods and services (hotels, restaurants, parking, and more). Orchestras are often the largest arts employer in a community, with up to 100 musicians on-stage. The pandemic has posed extraordinary challenges and opportunities for orchestras, and they are coming out of this period with new energy to adapt to the changed environment. In 2017, an estimated 160,000 musicians performed in orchestras across the United States.¹

Orchestras contribute to the creative and civic vitality of communities

Orchestras contribute to healthy societies through their active participation in civic life, as communities with orchestras draw together musicians, volunteers, philanthropists, and other civic-minded stakeholders. Orchestras provide [lifelong musical experiences and participation in the creative process](#). They enhance the quality of life in their communities by collaborating with school systems and other local partners to deliver a wide array of community programs. The 138 U.S. orchestras that participated in a 2016-17 League survey (the Orchestra Statistical Report) alone offered over 46,000 educational and community engagement concerts, activities, and other related events that year, serving almost 2.3 million participants — 64% of whom attended for free. Orchestras offer [a wide variety of programs tailored to meet community needs](#), including pre-school learning, in-depth residencies in schools, afterschool partnerships, educational classes for seniors, and health and wellness programs, and continue these programs throughout the pandemic.¹

Orchestras are taking important steps to right historic wrongs, on stage and off

Orchestras across all budget sizes and geographic locations have substantially increased the presence of BIPOC composers, conductors, and artists in their programming over the past several years. Repertoire by historic European composers continues to predominate on orchestra stages, but a recent report from the Institute for Composer Diversity, produced in partnership with the League of American Orchestras³, found that works by past and present women composers and composers of color rose by 400% from 2015 to 2022. Today's orchestras are increasing their investments in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), creating fellowships for musicians and conductors of color; developing community-centered residencies for composers; investing in senior staff positions to lead EDI efforts; and working to establish more equitable organizational cultures. The League of American Orchestras is accelerating field-wide progress through vital resources and grants, and hundreds of hours of EDI discussion and learning across our digital and in-person programming throughout the year. Over the past five years, the League has disbursed 96 grants totaling \$2,044,515 to help

³Institute for Composer Diversity, produced in partnership with the League of American Orchestras, 2022 Orchestra Repertoire Report

orchestras create more equitable, diverse, and inclusive organizational cultures; 23 grants to composers and orchestras totaling \$314,000 to support performances of works by women composers; and, in partnership with the Sphinx Organization and the New World Symphony, 529 grants for 355 Black and Latinx musicians totaling \$480,000 as part of the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS).

Orchestras partner with communities to increase access to music education for young people

Comprehensive music education helps prepare students to succeed in school, work, and life. That is why the great majority of orchestras engage in [advocacy on behalf of in-school music education](#) in their communities. Students “play their part” by collaborating with their fellow orchestra musicians to develop skills, self-discipline, and individual expression. There are more than 400 youth orchestras across America, with new orchestras created each year to help meet the growing demand for music education and positive activities for young people. These orchestras involve more than 80,000 young musicians in the joy of music-making and all its ancillary benefits. And this work did not stop during the pandemic: orchestras partnered with caregivers, schools, and community-based organizations to offer [online opportunities for learners of all ages](#), with nearly three-quarters (72%) of responding orchestras creating new programs and partnerships amid the pandemic, and 61% livestreaming educational programs and events.⁴

Music inspires us, strengthens us, and brings us together

People are uplifted by orchestras during times of celebration and sorrow. Music and the arts are critical to a healthy society, and the drive to perform continued throughout the pandemic: entering the 2020-21 season, a survey indicated that orchestral music was being delivered digitally—much of it free of charge (64%)—when in-person concerts could not happen. These took the form of live-streamed concerts (81%), streaming of archival recordings (41%), and new creative content curated specifically for social media (59%).⁴

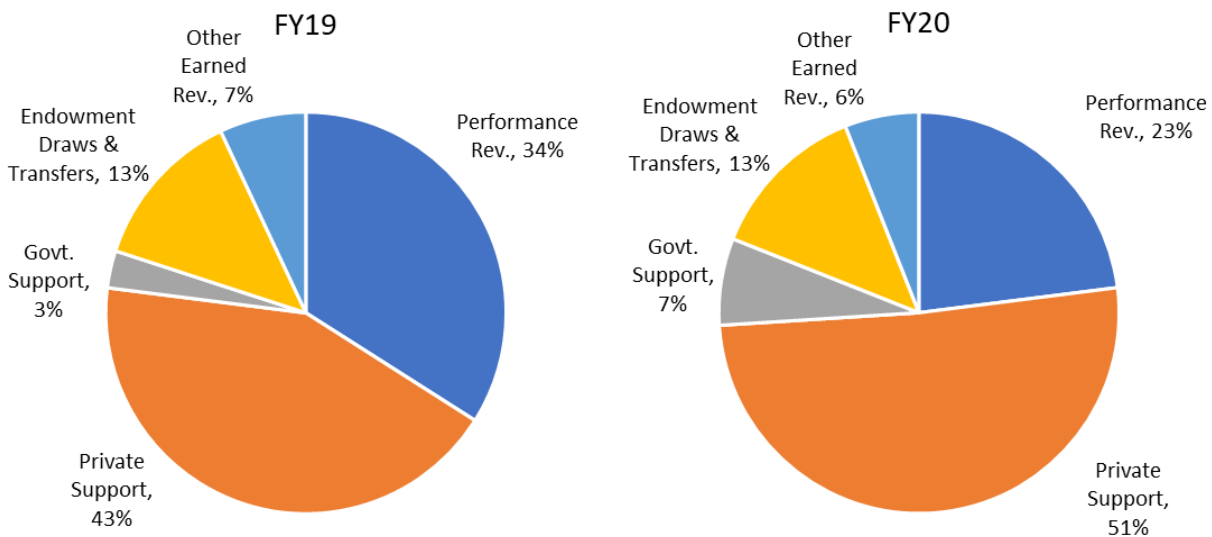
Orchestras deliver on their nonprofit mission thanks to charitable contributions from a broad base of donors

Orchestras are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Individual and institutional donors are critical to helping orchestras make music and services available to their communities, and contributions far outweigh ticket sales as a revenue source. The charitable gifts that make the work of orchestras possible come from donors across the economic spectrum. Each year from 2010 through 2014, roughly 75% of the gifts from the general public were under \$250, demonstrating that community members with a wide range of economic means find value in their local orchestras and invest in their sustainability. Given the ongoing constraints on earned revenue throughout the pandemic, charitable giving is an even more critical source of support.²

⁴ Based on the 124 orchestras completing the League’s August 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey

The music and community partnerships of U.S. orchestras are made possible through a combination of philanthropy, government support, and ticket sales

The following depicts orchestras’ revenue for fiscal years 2019 and 2020. Given the schedule of orchestra fiscal years, many of which would have concluded in July 2020, the fiscal year 2020 data does not fully convey the impact of the pandemic and reflects a period before most federal relief was fully enacted. Of orchestras responding to a February 2022 survey, 90% reported that federal relief had a significant impact on their ability to maintain their performance and other program activity, and to retain their workforce throughout the pandemic.⁵



The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America’s orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 1,800 organizations and individuals across North America 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 symphonic music. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners.

⁵ Based on the 154 and 151 orchestras completing the League’s OSR survey for 2019 and 2020 and excluding independent youth orchestras as well as the 128 orchestras participating in the League’s February 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey

An updated version of this document, reflecting FY21 Orchestra Statistical Report data, will be posted on the [League’s website](https://americanorchestras.org) when it becomes available.