

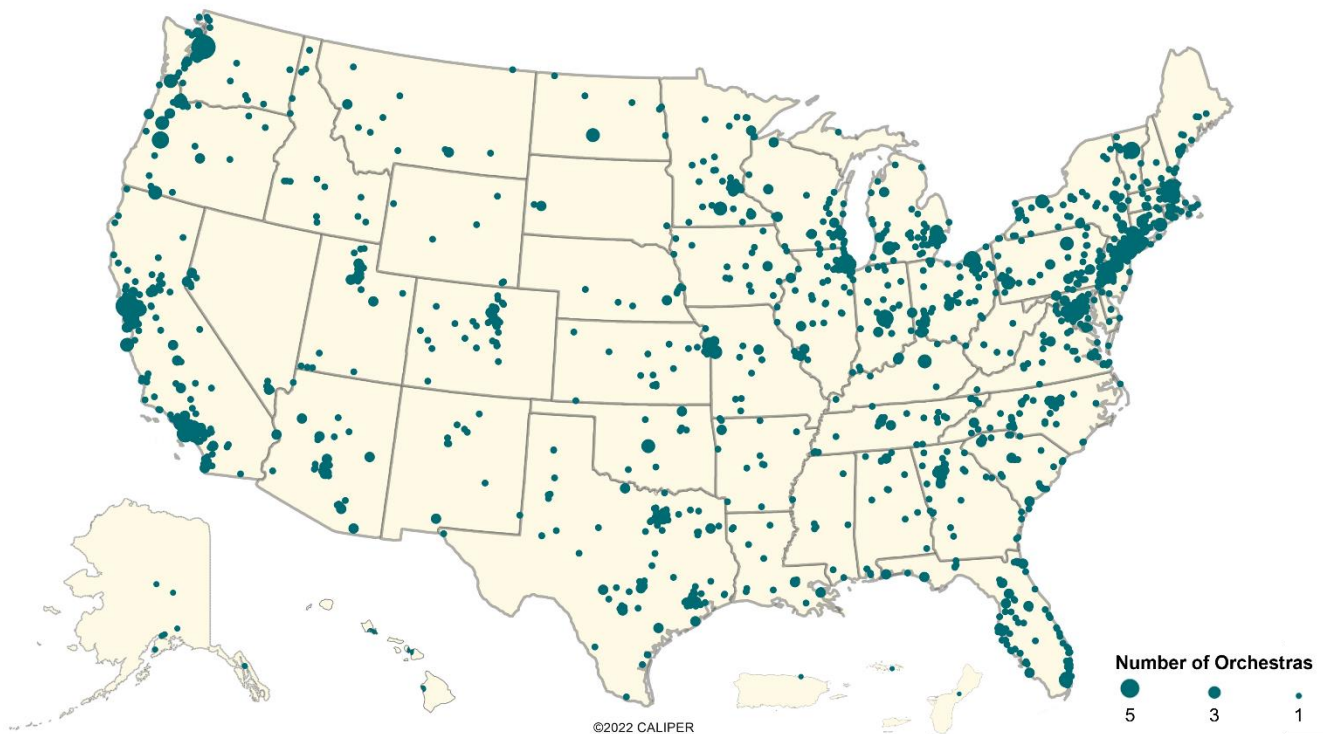
Orchestras at a Glance

October 2024

League
of American
Orchestras

Orchestras serve communities large and small

There are approximately **2,200** professional, community, and youth orchestras in the U.S. which exist in all 50 states and perform in communities of all sizes. Annual budgets for orchestras range from less than \$30,000 to more than \$100 million; **77% of all orchestras had budgets under \$300,000 in 2022.**^{i & ii}



This map depicts the 2,218 orchestras identified through a partnership between the League of American Orchestras and SMU's DataArts. This data is derived from IRS tax filings and DataArts' Cultural Data Profiler for fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Orchestras are a vital part of America's musical landscape

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. Orchestras provide **lifelong musical experiences and participation in the creative process.**

26,000
orchestra performancesⁱⁱⁱ

28%
of performances were
completely free^{iv}

22.6 million
total orchestra attendanceⁱⁱⁱ

Teal boxes represent data from the 2022 - 2023 Season, unless noted otherwise

Orchestras at a Glance uses data from several League publications and partners; the most common source is the League's Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR). The most recent OSR collected data for the **2022-2023** season, which represents a period when orchestras were still emerging from the impact of the Covid pandemic.

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

\$2.5 Billion

direct orchestra expenses went back into local economiesⁱⁱⁱ

Orchestras' economic impact far exceeds direct expenses -- 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 posed extraordinary challenges and opportunities for orchestra employment, and they emerged from this period with new energy to adapt to the changed environment. More than 90% of orchestras indicated that federal pandemic relief was essential to maintaining their workforce.^{iv} In 2023, orchestras filled over 346,000 paid and volunteer positions, hosted over 72,000 volunteers, 24,000 board members, and 26,000 administrative positions.ⁱⁱⁱ

223,000

musician posts filled by orchestras across the United Statesⁱⁱⁱ

25 to 600

range of musicians engaged per orchestraⁱⁱⁱ

Orchestras have increased investment and representation for racial and gender equity

Orchestras across all budget sizes and geographic locations have substantially increased the presence of women and BIPOC composers, conductors, and artists in their programming since the 2017-18 season. Today's orchestras are increasing their investments in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI),

1.6% and 11.9%

percentage of performed repertoire by women and non-binary composers in the 2015-16 and 2023-24 seasons^{vi}

3.2% and 16.6%

percentage of performed repertoire by BIPOC composers in the 2015-16 and 2023-24 seasons^{vi}

creating fellowships or other professional development programs that help orchestras represent the full diversity of the communities they serve; 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.

Between fiscal years 2019 and 2023, the League has

disbursed more than 120 grants totaling over \$2,553,042 to help orchestras create more equitable, diverse, and inclusive organizational cultures; disbursed 52 Grants to composers and orchestras totaling \$551,750 to support performances of works by women composers; and, in partnership with the Sphinx Organization and the New World Symphony, 1668 grants for 539 musicians of color totaling \$1,191,736 as part of the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS).

Orchestras contribute to the creative, civic, and educational 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 enhance the quality of life in their communities by collaborating with school systems and other local partners to deliver programs on and off the stage. 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.

6,500

*educational and community
engagement concerts*

1.8 million

*attendance at education and
community engagement concerts^{iv}*

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

400 +

youth orchestras across Americaⁱⁱⁱ

their communities. Students “play their part” by collaborating with their fellow orchestra musicians to develop skills, self-discipline, and individual expression. 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.^v

People are also 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 full duration of the pandemic. A survey of the 2020-21 season indicated that orchestral music was being delivered digitally—much of it free of charge (64%)—when in-person concerts could not happen. Orchestras moved their performances online, with orchestras providing live-streamed concerts (81% of orchestras), streaming of archival recordings (41% of orchestras), and new creative content curated specifically for social media (59% of orchestras).^v Concert activity during the 2022 season brought a gradual return to live performances, with many orchestras continuing to present innovative programming and new approaches to concert formats as audiences returned to venues.

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

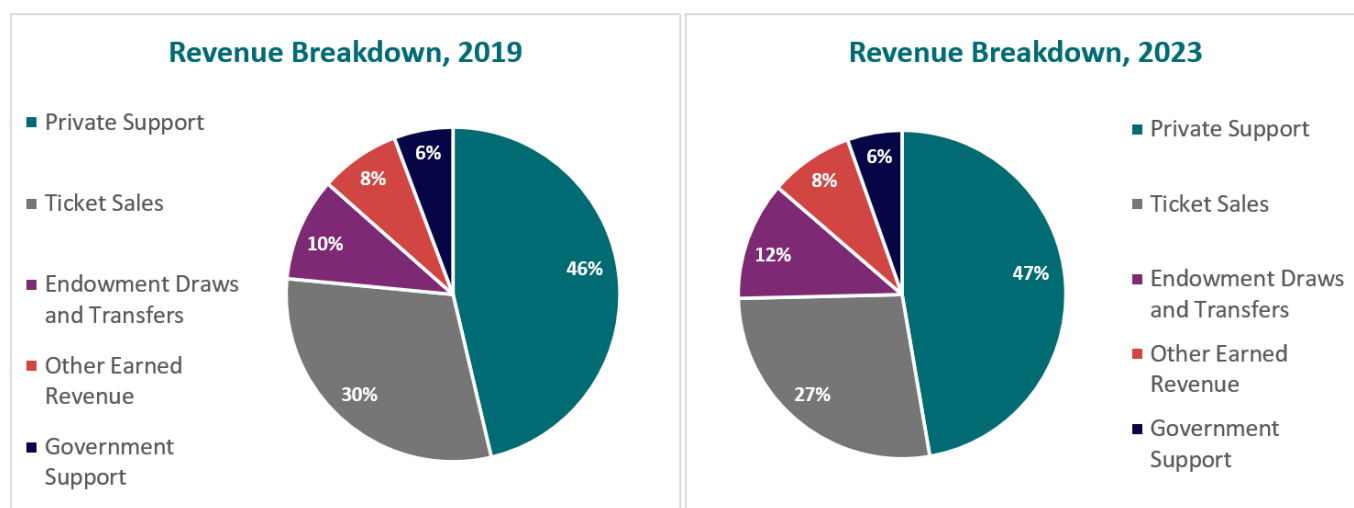
Orchestras are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Individual and institutional donors are critical to helping orchestras make music and services available to their communities, and contributions far outweigh ticket sales as a revenue source. The charitable gifts that make the work of orchestras possible come from donors across the economic spectrum, with 72% of the charitable gifts to orchestras 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 rising costs and the ongoing constraints on earned revenue throughout the pandemic, charitable giving is an even more critical source of support.

72%

*of charitable gifts to orchestras from
the general public were under \$250ⁱⁱⁱ*

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

During the pandemic, orchestras relied heavily on government and private support to continue their work. Emerging from the pandemic, the breakdown of orchestra operating revenues have largely returned to that of the pre-pandemic environment. The following charts depict orchestras' operating revenue for fiscal years 2019 and 2023, highlighting this "return to normal."ⁱⁱⁱ



Want to Learn More About the Orchestra Field?

Visit the League's Research and Resources Website at:

<https://americanorchestras.org/learn/resources-data-and-research/>

The **League of American Orchestras** champions the vitality of music and the orchestral experience, supports the orchestra community, and leads change boldly. The only national organization dedicated to orchestras and their communities, the League supports the field through advocacy, research, convenings, leadership development, artistic programs, and grants. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League includes nearly 25,000 musicians, conductors, orchestra staff, board members, volunteers, and business partners working within our membership of 1600 world-renowned orchestras, community groups, summer festivals, student and youth ensembles, conservatories and libraries, businesses serving orchestras, and individuals who love symphonic music.

i We know the approximate number and budget of orchestras due to IRS data, provided by SMU DataArts.

ii The League had previously reported that there were 2,000 orchestras in the US. This year we used additional methods of combing IRS data to arrive at an updated figure. These methods include reviewing 'EZ File' submissions (for orchestras with annual budgets under \$50,000) and undertaking a text-based search of organizations that used tax filing codes not typically associated with orchestras.

iii This estimate is based on the League's 2023 OSR and IRS data.

iv This estimate is based on the League's 2022 OSR and IRS data.

v These figures are drawn from 124 orchestras who completed the League's August 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey.

vi These figures are drawn from the 2024 Orchestra Repertoire Report, produced by the Institute for Composer Diversity in partnership with the League of American Orchestras.