

# Inclusive Stages

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# Context

## Our Vision

**A thriving future for orchestras and their communities that celebrates creativity, artistry, and inclusion.**

## Our Mission

**To champion the vitality of music and the orchestral experience, support the orchestra community, and lead change boldly.**

## **Accelerating the Pace of Change in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

**The League is committed to threading the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) throughout its work, with the ultimate goal that the field reflects and embodies the diversity of this country.**

# League EDI Resources

- » **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Resource Center**  
<https://americanorchestras.org/learn/equity-diversity-and-inclusion>
- » **EDI Data Hub**  
<https://americanorchestras.org/learn/edi-data-hub/>
- » **Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field in 2023**  
<https://americanorchestras.org/racial-ethnic-and-gender-diversity-in-the-orchestra-field-in-2023>
- » **2023 Orchestra Repertoire Report**  
<https://americanorchestras.org/2023-orchestra-repertoire-report>
- » **Promising Practices: Actions Orchestras Can Take to Make Progress Toward Equity**  
<https://americanorchestras.org/promising-practices-actions-orchestras-can-take-to-make-progress-toward-equity>
- » **Catalyst Snapshots: EDI Case Studies from American Orchestras**  
<https://americanorchestras.org/catalyst-snapshots-edi-case-studies-from-american-orchestras>

# National Alliance for Audition Support



**National Alliance for  
Audition Support**

*Alianza Nacional para el apoyo de la audición*

[AuditionAlliance.org](http://AuditionAlliance.org)

**SPHINX**  
Aaron F. Swarkin • Founder



**New World Symphony**  
America's Orchestral Academy  
Michael Tilson Thomas, Artistic Director

**League  
of American  
Orchestras**

# Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field in 2023

A Report by the League of American Orchestras

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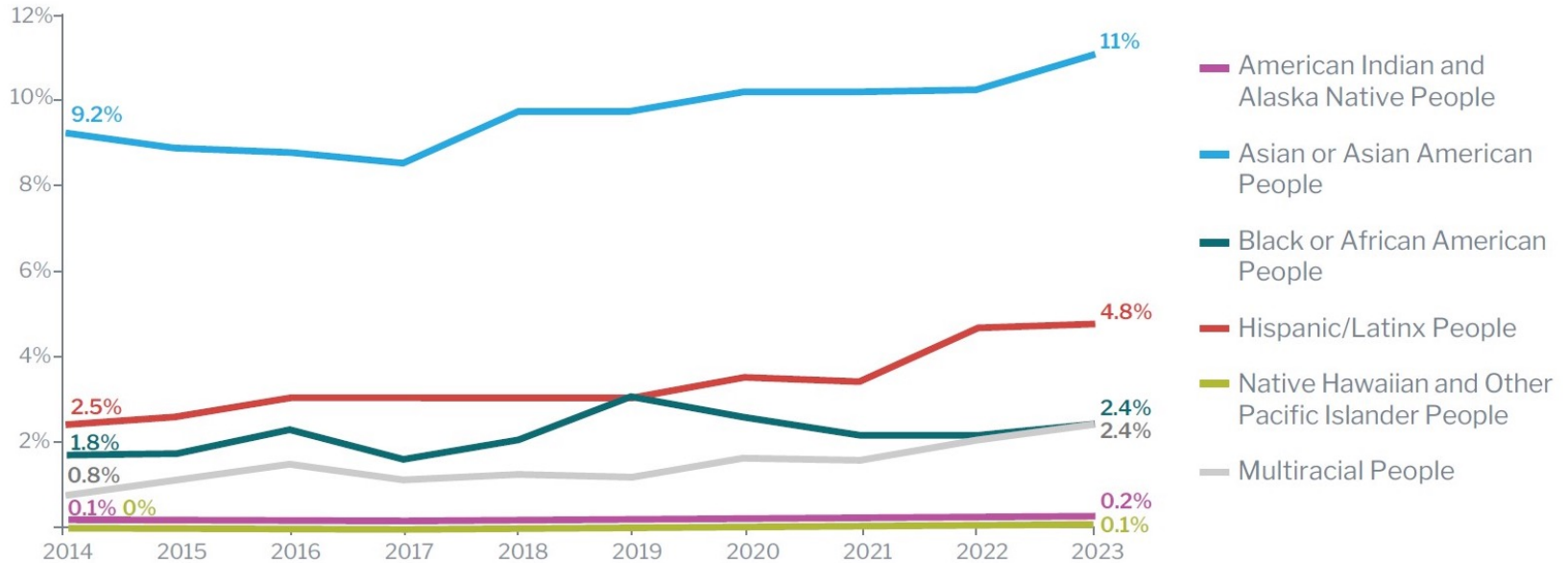


## Musician Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native representation is significantly lower among orchestra musicians than in the U.S. population overall.

Continuing a longstanding trend, Black or African American musician representation improved at a slower rate than that of any other racial/ethnic group, increasing only very slightly during the ten-year period.

## Musician Racial/Ethnic Diversity



# Response

# Inclusive Stages

A program of the League of American Orchestras

**The goal of Inclusive Stages is to increase the racial diversity of musicians in American professional and community orchestras.**

*Made possible by a generous grant from the Sakana Foundation*

## Guiding Values

- » Musicians will always be included.
- » The perspectives of musicians of color will always be prioritized.
- » Orchestras will determine their own goals and actions.
- » We have waited long enough...our Coalition will make **measurable progress within three years.**

## Summary

**Inclusive Stages** will propel the field's work to increase musician racial diversity in American orchestras in two ways:

**Data Collection & Analysis:** *What information is missing?*

**Coalition Building:** *What collaboration is missing?*

# Key Components

## Data Collection & Analysis: *What information is missing?*

**Inclusion Index:** self-reported experiential data from staff and musicians

**Audition Applicant Demographics Survey:** voluntary self-reported data

**Audition & Tenure Practices Survey:** understanding the variety of audition practices and their prevalence

**Orchestra Demographics Survey:** snapshots of racial/ethnic and gender diversity within orchestras

# Key Components

## **Coalition Building:** *What collaboration is missing?*

Music Directors

Executive Directors

Musicians

Staff

Board Members

Union Representatives

Professional Orchestras

Community Orchestras

Youth Orchestras

Higher Education

Pathways Programs

Partner Organizations



# How to Participate

# Orchestra Participation Options

## Two options:

### 1. Data Partner

League member orchestras may choose to participate in one or more of the four data projects without further commitment.

### 2. Coalition Member

League member orchestras that commit to participating in all aspects of Inclusive Stages will be recognized as formal members of the Inclusive Stages Coalition and will receive additional benefits.

» Now open to youth orchestras, in addition to all professional and community orchestras.

# Individual Musician Participation

Individual musicians, particularly musicians of color, are invited to join the Coalition.

**Individual Musicians** are defined as:

» Adult orchestral musicians not currently affiliated with an orchestra

OR

» Musicians whose orchestras are not participating in the National Coalition.

# Institutional Participation

Institutions are also invited to join the Coalition.

**Institutions** are defined as professionals representing organizations connected to the orchestra field, including:

- » Musician union leadership and staff members;
- » League organizational partners;
- » Orchestra pathways programs;
- » Higher education institutions; and
- » Equity, diversity, and inclusion consultants.

# Data Collection & Analysis

# Key Components

## Data Collection & Analysis: *What information is missing?*

**Inclusion Index:** self-reported experiential data from staff and musicians

**Audition Applicant Demographics Survey:** voluntary self-reported data

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# Inclusion Index

- » Partnership with [Accordant Advisors](#)
- » Offers orchestras insight into their own organizational culture
- » Allows participants to identify where future EDI efforts can be best focused and track change over time
- » Provides data-based support to orchestras as they seek to provide the best possible work environment for every member of their organization
- » Smaller in scope than the pilot Inclusion Index
- » Provided at **no cost for up to 75 orchestras**
- » Coalition members will receive priority for no-cost participation
- » For more information, view the [Inclusion Index overview](#)

# Audition Applicant Demographics

- » Partnership with [Acceptd](#) and the [National Alliance for Audition Support](#) (NAAS)
- » Allows orchestras to compare their own data with national averages
- » Short survey, focused on self-reported race/ethnicity and gender, built on the Acceptd platform
- » Currently in use by many orchestras
- » Participation is **free** for everyone involved
- » Orchestras send link directly to audition applicants
- » **Orchestras automatically receive their anonymous data**
- » League receives anonymous data from all auditions



## Audition & Tenure Practices

- » Developed in partnership with pilot year coalition members, individual musicians, and the American Federation of Musicians of the US and Canada
- » Seeks to deepen understanding of the current audition and tenure landscape in our field
- » Aims to identify existing strengths and measure the prevalence of certain practices
- » Initial survey was taken by pilot year coalition members in Spring 2024; broader survey is projected to happen in 2025
- » Public summary provided through Catalyst Guide in 2026

# Orchestra Demographics

- » Compiles race/ethnicity and gender demographic data for orchestra musicians, administrative staff, board of directors, conductors, music directors, and executive directors
- » Provides a snapshot of the demographics in League member orchestras
- » Contributes to the League's ongoing efforts to report on [racial/ethnic and gender diversity trends](#) in the field
- » Will be conducted on a 2-year cycle, beginning in 2025, with findings published after each survey
- » For more information, visit the [Orchestra Demographics Survey website](#)

# Projected Timeline

## Year 1

Audition Applicant Demographics – ongoing  
Orchestra Demographics – January 2025

## Year 2

Audition Applicant Demographics – ongoing  
Audition & Tenure Practices – August 2025  
Inclusion Index – Fall 2025

## Year 3

Audition Applicant Demographics – ongoing  
Orchestra Demographics – January 2027

*NOTE: the above timeline may change – any changes will be communicated with all project participants in advance.*

# Coalition Building

## Overview of the Coalition

- » **Historically significant collective action**
- » Orchestras, musicians, and institutions that are ready to act, representing all budget sizes and geographic regions
- » Intent is to measurably improve the racial/ethnic diversity of coalition orchestra musicians within three years
- » Primary facilitation partner is [Leading ChangeMakers](#)

## Benefits of Joining

- » Share information, align efforts, and learn from each others' successes and failures
- » Help establish a new benchmark for change in our field
- » Orchestras receive priority for free participation in the Inclusion Index
- » Group 3-8 orchestras and individual musicians can receive travel support
- » Coalition members receive free access to all Inclusive Stages trainings
- » Coalition members receive highest level of access to findings from all four data projects

# Coalition Expectations: Adult Orchestras

- Commitments**
  - Participate in all coalition-wide meetings and trainings
  - Participate in all relevant data projects
  - Set goals, determine actions, track progress, and share results
  - Develop engagement plans for Music Director and musicians
  - Participate in a minimum of 1 working group
  - Designate one person as primary contact
- Endorsements**
  - Executive Director
  - Board Chair
- Engagement**
  - Executive Director
  - Music Director
  - Musicians

# What could “Engagement” look like?

- Executive Director**
  - Prioritize this work across staff goals and work plans
  - Participate in Coalition meetings
- Music Director**
  - Communicate the importance of this work
  - Participate in meetings with musicians, staff, and board
  - Make personal efforts to recruit musicians of color to auditions
  - Learn about and address bias in hiring and tenure processes
  - Participate in Coalition meetings
  - Participate in trainings, as relevant
- Musicians**
  - Communicate with and involve more musicians
  - Participate in Coalition meetings
  - Participate in trainings, as relevant



# Coalition Expectations: Youth Orchestras

- Commitments**
  - Participate in all coalition-wide meetings and trainings
  - Participate in all relevant data projects
  - Set goals, determine actions, track progress, and share results
  - Develop engagement plans for minimum of 1 conductor
  - Participate in a minimum of 1 working group
  - Designate one person as primary contact
- Endorsements**
  - Executive Director
  - Board Chair
- Engagement**
  - Executive Director
  - Minimum of 1 conductor

## What could “Engagement” look like?

- Executive Director**
  - Prioritize this work across staff goals and work plans
  - Participate in Coalition meetings
- Conductor(s)**
  - Communicate the importance of this work
  - Participate in meetings with staff and board
  - Make personal efforts to recruit musicians of color to auditions
  - Learn about and address bias in hiring and tenure processes
  - Participate in Coalition meetings
  - Participate in trainings, as relevant

# Sample Orchestra Actions

- » Join the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS).
- » Adopt some or all of the NAAS [Recommendations on Auditions and Tenure](#).
- » Adopt some or all of the Black Orchestral Network's [Ten Steps Toward Equity in the Tenure Process](#)
- » Adopt some or all of the Model Standards and Procedures for Probationary Process by the AFM and the Black Orchestral Network.
- » Develop recruitment plans to attract more under-represented musicians to auditions.
- » Participate in the [Sphinx Orchestral Partners Audition](#) (SOPA).
- » Advance qualified SOPA candidates directly to semi-final audition rounds.
- » Advance diversity fellows of peer orchestras directly to semi-final audition rounds.
- » Invite under-represented musicians to advanced audition stages.
- » Implement inclusive hiring training for audition committees, tenure committees, orchestra committees, orchestra personnel staff, and music directors.

## Working Groups

- » New structure, created based on feedback from Pilot Year coalition members
- » Small, constituent-led groups, focused on specific themes
- » Themes will be identified and drawn from goals submitted by coalition members in Spring 2025
- » Potential themes include musician engagement, music director engagement, higher education partnerships, audition & tenure practices, intersectionality, and more
- » Opportunity for individuals, orchestras, and/or institutions to take a leadership role

# Upcoming Coalition Meetings

- January 2025**
  - First meeting of the expanded coalition
- Virtual**
  - Primarily for musicians, executive leadership, artistic leadership
  - Coalition members begin developing or revisiting their goals
- Spring 2025**
  - Mix of virtual and regional in-person coalition-wide convenings
  - Coalition members determine immediate actions and metrics
  - Working groups are established
- June 2025**
  - First national in-person convening of the expanded coalition
- Salt Lake City**
  - Coalition members share status of current efforts
  - Coalition members participate in workshop, led by [Leading ChangeMakers](#)

## What to do next?

- Discuss** • What is the right involvement for your orchestra?
- Attend a Q&A Session** • [Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4-5pm Eastern](#)  
• [Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1-2pm Eastern](#)
- Participate in Data Projects** • Sign up to use the Audition Applicant Demographics Survey  
• Sign up to [become a Data Partner](#)
- Join the Coalition** • Participate in everything by [joining the Coalition](#)

# Questions

# Inclusive Stages

*Thank you!*

[americanorchestras.org/InclusiveStages](https://americanorchestras.org/InclusiveStages)