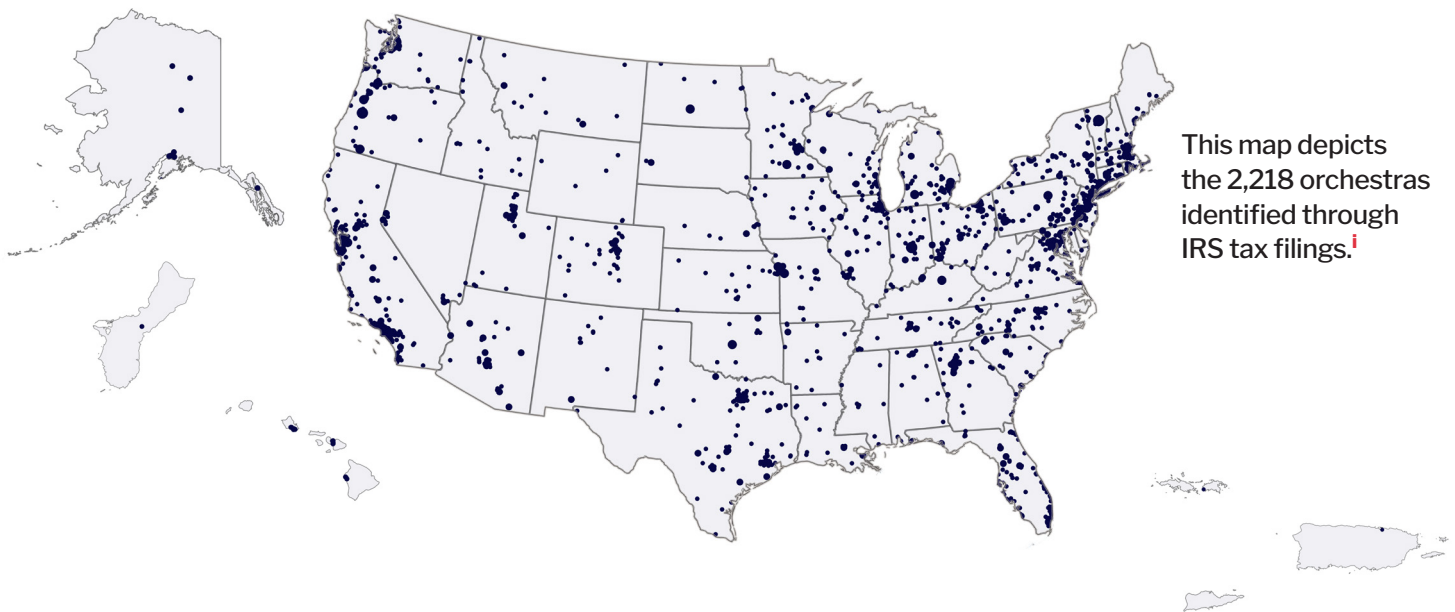


# Orchestras at a Glance

## A vital part of America's cultural landscape

In concert halls across the country, American audiences are inspired and engaged by orchestras of all kinds, each ensemble as unique as its community. They are professional, community, and youth organizations—in cities, rural areas, and everything in between. Extraordinary musicians connect with their communities on and off the stage, bringing people together to share live music-making.

### Orchestras, large and small, strengthen their communities



- **2,200 orchestras** make music in all **50 states**.<sup>i</sup>
- League member orchestras are in **more than 300 of the 435 voting Congressional districts**—and are represented by **all U.S. Senators** (as of October 2025).
- Annual budgets for orchestras range from less than **\$30,000 to more than \$100 million**.<sup>i</sup>
- **77%** of all orchestras have budgets under **\$300,000**.<sup>i</sup>
- Together, orchestras presented **30,000** performances over the 2024–2025 season, **40%** of which were free.<sup>ii</sup>
- All told, **22.5** million people attended orchestral concerts over the 2024–2025 season.

This document draws on data from multiple League publications and partners, with the Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR) as the primary source. Unless otherwise noted, all OSR data reflects the 2024–2025 season.

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**below** Houston Symphony orchestra musicians join Community-Embedded Musicians in monthly interactive performances as part of the Dementia Center Performance Series. Photo by Melissa Taylor.  
**right** Audience members break into applause at an Arkansas Symphony Concert. Photo by Kelly Hicks.



## Economic and civic engines in their communities

Orchestras play an outsized role in the creative economies of their communities: they drive local commerce and bolster businesses. With up to 100 musicians on stage—and many more people making the music possible—they are often the largest arts employers in their communities. By drawing together musicians, audiences, supporters, students, volunteers, and civic officials, orchestras help build lively, healthy communities—places where people want to live, work, and raise families.

### Financial and civic benefits to communities, 2024-2025 season

- **\$2.8 billion** in direct orchestra expenses went back into local economies.<sup>ii</sup>
- **288,000 musician posts** were active at orchestras across the country.<sup>ii</sup>
- **25-500 musicians** are engaged per orchestra.<sup>ii</sup>
- **32,000 administrative positions** keep orchestras running smoothly.<sup>ii</sup>
- **96,000 volunteers** connect orchestras to their communities.<sup>ii</sup>
- **24,000 board members** donate resources, provide leadership, and represent their communities.<sup>ii</sup>

## Relevant and responsive

American orchestras are nimble, innovative, and attuned to the needs of their communities. Through their programming, embrace of new concert formats, and by meeting their communities where they are, orchestras provide both new and prospective audiences a range of opportunities to enjoy the sweep and nuance of orchestral music.

### Orchestras across the country are...

- **expanding** their programming across genres;
- **presenting** family movies with live scores;
- **integrating** other disciplines, such as dance and theater;
- **bolstering** video capabilities to be able to present full concert experiences online and on-demand;
- **developing** content specifically for social media and short-form formats; and
- **performing** in libraries, schools, churches, healthcare facilities, parks—and even cafés.

## Essential partners in music education and community programs

Orchestras collaborate with local school systems, healthcare organizations, and their cities and towns to provide a wide variety of programs tailored to meet community needs. They advocate for in-school music education and partner to provide residencies in schools, afterschool activities, and both group and individual lessons. Orchestras support life-long learning for pre-school learners to adults, augmenting live engagement with extensive digital resources. Strong participation in youth orchestras, choruses, and side-by-side concerts—for both students and adults—confirms the enduring appeal of making music, together.

### Benefits to students and their communities

- **21,650** education, community engagement, and affiliated youth orchestra concerts and events in the 2024-2025 season.<sup>ii,iv</sup>
- **4.6 million** students and adults participated in these activities.<sup>ii</sup>
- **400** vibrant youth orchestras across the country.<sup>i</sup>



**top** Knoxville Symphony Orchestra UnStaged music-centric events pair music and community partners; Flow connects music with Yoga. Photo courtesy of Knoxville Symphony Orchestra.

**left** A performance by youth Coda Program musicians at the 2024 Conference session, “Creative Partnerships to Maximize Youth Learning and Development.” Photo by Melissa Taylor.





**left** San Diego Symphony, under the direction of Michelle di Russo, performs for local students in grades 3-5. Photo by Gary Payne.

**bottom** Akron Symphony Orchestra audience members applaud a February 2026 performance of *Gospel Meets Symphony*. Photo by Dale Dong.



## Orchestras embrace and reflect their communities

Over the last decade, orchestras of all sizes have substantially increased the presence of under-represented composers, conductors, and artists in their programming. They are moving to have the musicians on the stage better reflect their communities and are establishing and strengthening inclusive organizational cultures. Through grants, research, discussions, and a wealth of in-person and online resources and programming, the League of American Orchestras is accelerating these important initiatives.

### Advancing wider representation

- Percentage of **performed repertoire by women and non-binary composers** increased from **1.6%** in 2015-16 to **11.9%** in the 2023-24 season.<sup>iii</sup>
- Percentage of **performed repertoire by composers of color** increased from **3.2%** in 2015-16 to **16.6%** in the 2023-24 season.<sup>iii</sup>

### Orchestras across the country received support from the League.

#### Between fiscal years 2019 and 2023, the League dispersed:

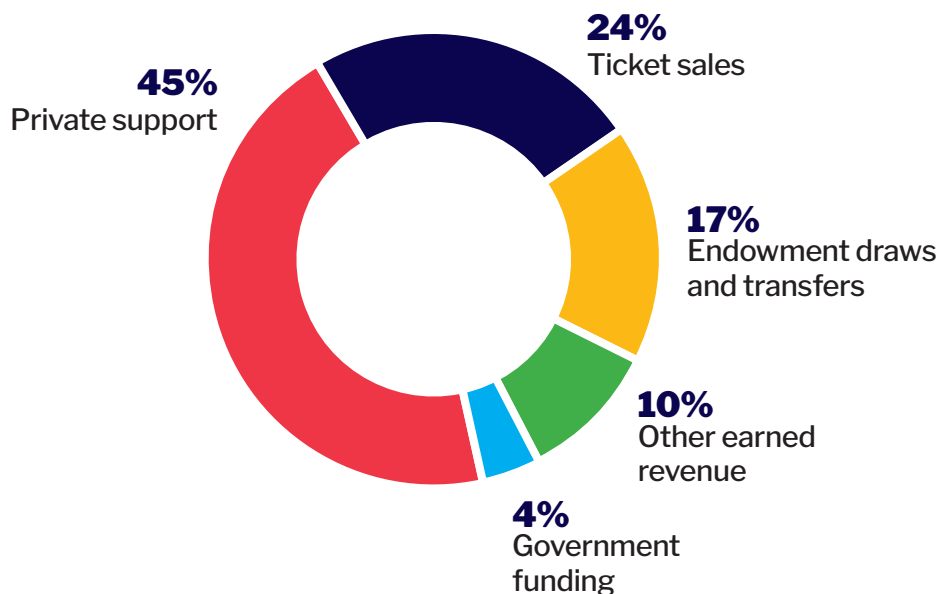
- **120** grants totaling over **\$2.5 million** to help orchestras create more diverse and inclusive organizational cultures.
- **52** grants to composers and orchestras totaling over **\$500,000** to support performances by women composers.
- **1668** grants totaling **\$1.2 million**, in partnership with the Sphinx Organization and the New World Symphony, including **539 grants** supporting diversity as part of the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS).

# Community support powers and sustains orchestras' important work

Orchestras are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that depend on many individual and institutional donors to make their music, community programming, and educational initiatives widely accessible. Donations far outweigh ticket sales as a source of revenue. And while major donors are important, there is broad participation from smaller donors—including an ever-increasing number of younger donors—demonstrating that community members across various economic and age groups find value and relevance in their local orchestras.

## Contributed income is critical

- **64%** of charitable gifts to orchestras from the general public were under \$250, showing broad support.<sup>ii</sup>
- Typical revenue breakdown in 2025:



**top** Albany Symphony musicians performing in front of the Capitol as part of SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras in 2018. Photo by Gary Gold.

**right** Boise Phil, Meet the Brass in September 2020. Photo by Chris Thometz





**left** Greenville County Youth Orchestra musicians before a recent concert. Photo by Derek Eckenroth.  
**above** Participants from the Chicago Philharmonic and Detroit Symphony catch up with one another at an Inclusive Stages convening in Louisville. Photo by O’Neil Arnold.

## Vibrant artistry and creative leadership enrich our communities

Today’s American orchestras are evolving with energy and purpose: they’re creative, forward-thinking enterprises that re-invent as much as they re-affirm—listening and responding to the needs of their communities. Exceptional musicians bring their music to both life-long concertgoers and those for whom it is all new. They foster and share the talent of tomorrow—propelling both the arc of music and individual careers. Year in, year out, orchestra leaders, staff, musicians, boards, and volunteers demonstrate that they are as deeply committed to their communities as they are to the music that enriches so many lives.

### To learn more about the orchestra field,

- visit the League’s Research and Resources website at: [americanorchestras.org/learn/resources-data-and-research](https://americanorchestras.org/learn/resources-data-and-research)
- and check out the League’s magazine at [symphony.org](https://symphony.org)

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, and artistic programs. 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 2000 world-renowned orchestras, community groups, summer festivals, student and youth ensembles, conservatories and libraries, businesses serving orchestras, and individuals who love orchestral music.

<sup>i</sup> We know the approximate number and budget of orchestras through IRS data.

<sup>ii</sup> This estimate is based on IRS data and the League’s OSR data from fiscal year 2025.

<sup>iii</sup> Figures drawn from the 2024 Orchestra Repertoire Report, produced by the Institute for Composer Diversity in partnership with the League of American Orchestras.

<sup>iv</sup> An “affiliated” youth orchestra is administratively housed within an adult orchestra, sharing its organizational and legal structure.