



**National Alliance for
Audition Support**

Alianza Nacional para el apoyo de la audición

&

Inclusive Stages

A program of the League of American Orchestras

Audition Applicant Demographics Survey

Participant Toolkit:

*A Step-by-Step Guide to Learning More about Your
Auditionees*



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Welcome

We are excited to welcome your orchestra as a participant in the Audition Applicant Demographics Survey, developed through the National Alliance for Audition Support and utilized as a part of Inclusive Stages, a program of the League of American Orchestras.

This survey aims to shed light on the demographics of individuals auditioning for roles in professional and community orchestras. By collecting and analyzing audition applicant demographic information, we seek to gain valuable insights that can inform efforts to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of musicians onstage, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and representative orchestral community. Your orchestra's participation in this project not only contributes to the broader goal of enhancing diversity within our field, but also provides valuable data about the individuals seeking to enter our industry. These insights may guide orchestras' efforts to develop more inclusive and equitable audition processes, leading to more representative and artistically enriched orchestras.

All participating orchestras will receive a summary of results following the submission of their auditionees' data. The report will provide a snapshot of current audition applicant demographics within participating orchestras, allowing for greater understanding of the individuals seeking to enter the orchestra field. Orchestras may be able to use the aggregated findings to inform their recruitment and audition practices.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The goal of this toolkit is to help maximize your efforts by improving the efficiency with which auditionees' data is collected and by encouraging higher response rates from your auditionees.

In this document you will find the survey schedule and checklist for this upcoming season, guidelines for the data collection process, and a series of communication templates, which will help you reach an optimal response rate for your orchestra. The included templates are intended to provide ideas and sample language for communications that provide clarity about the survey. Please adjust the language you find in this document as necessary to meet the unique needs of your orchestra.

Clear and transparent communication is key to maximizing the impact of this survey. Encouraging open dialogue both within your team and with auditionees about the survey's purpose helps build trust and ensures that the data collected truly reflects your audition pool.

Important note: *In order for us to be able to use your orchestra's data, we will need a minimum response rate of 80%. This means that for each audition your orchestra holds, at least 80% of auditionees must submit this survey. See the [Survey Guidelines](#) for more information about participating in this project.*

Please be in touch with any questions about this.



Survey Timeline & Checklist

- **September 2026 or as soon as possible:** Introduce staff to the project, ensuring familiarity with the process and [Survey Guidelines](#).
- **September 2026 – Monday, June 1, 2026:** Collect audition applicant demographic data.
 - *Note: We are no longer using Acceptd for this survey. Please see the [Survey Guidelines](#) for more information.*
- **Prior to Each Audition:** Ensure survey link (if using Acceptd) and contextual information is sent out to auditionees and/or included in application materials.
 - *Depending on how you choose to communicate with your auditionees about the survey, we recommend using either the [Direct Invitation to Auditionees](#) template or the [Template Language for Application Materials](#).*
 - *If necessary, review the [Survey Guidelines](#).*
- **After Each Audition:** Encourage auditionees to participate in the survey, if they have not already completed it. We *strongly recommend* emphasizing two points:
(1) participation in the survey has no impact on their audition results, and
(2) their participation is strongly encouraged, even if they choose to use the 'Prefer not to disclose' options.
 - *Since each orchestra's audition timeline is different, we are intentionally not providing a specific recommendation around the timing for this reminder. We do, however, *strongly recommend* reminding auditionees about the survey at a time when they are not actively participating in the audition process, for example: after they exit the audition process; between rounds, if there are more than one or two days before the next round; etc.*
 - *Please see the [Reminder Email](#) template for suggested language.*
- **Monday, June 7, 2026:** The League sends out an email with a prompt to submit the data collected by your orchestra.
- **Monday, June 7 – Friday, July 9, 2027:** Submit the 2025-2026 season data collected by your orchestra to the League.
- **September 2027:** The League sends out the aggregated summary report to participating orchestras.



Survey Guidelines

Please read the following guidelines closely, as there is key information about how to participate in the Audition Applicant Demographics Survey.

- We are currently focused on collecting demographic information for auditions that occur during the **2026-2027 season**. Please do not include data from prior seasons.
 - **NEW THIS YEAR:** We will only be accepting data that was manually collected by orchestras. We will no longer accept data collected through the Acceptd survey, as the past three years of survey data have shown this to be a significantly less effective data collection method. For orchestras that have historically used Acceptd, please read the information below carefully to shift to manual data collection. If you have any questions about this transition, contact inclusivestages@americanorchestras.org.
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SURVEY CONTEXT & QUESTIONS

The race and ethnicity categories and definitions used in this survey are based on federal data collection standards set by the Office of Management and Budget, which acknowledges that "the categories in this classification are social-political constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature." The League recognizes that these categories are not perfect, but they facilitate collecting, reporting, and, importantly, acting on this information.

Please bear the following definitions in mind when asking auditionees to complete this survey:

- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic / Latinx:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. Please include any individuals who have indicated Hispanic / Latinx and any other category.
- **Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the West Asia, or North Africa.
- **Two or more races:** any individual who indicates more than one race, excluding those indicating Hispanic / Latinx ethnicity. Please use Hispanic / Latinx for those individuals.

This survey also captures gender identity. Please note, this is not sexual orientation, or sex assigned at birth, but rather an individual's identification of their gender.



Survey Questions

Please select your instrument family:

- Strings (*includes harp*)
- Woodwinds
- Brass
- Percussion (*includes piano*)

Which of the following categories most closely resembles your Race/Ethnicity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic / Latinx
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races
- Prefer to self-describe [*include text box*]
- Prefer not to disclose

Which of the categories most closely resembles your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-Binary
- Prefer to self-describe [*include text box*]
- Prefer not to disclose

DATA COLLECTION

- Your orchestra's auditionee data will need to be compiled and submitted to the League at the end of the season (typically in June).
- We **strongly encourage** you to use the communication templates below throughout each audition to encourage auditionees to participate in the survey.
- We **strongly encourage** you to use the [attached spreadsheet](#) to track your data during the current 2026-2027 season. The formatting in this spreadsheet will help streamline the submission process for you.
 - Read the 'Instructions' tab closely, as it contains helpful information about the data that you include.
 - Add in your orchestra's demographic information on the 'EnterFormData' tab.
 - The spreadsheet will automatically calculate and format the totals for you in the 'Summary' tab.
- In early June 2027, the League will send out a submission form link to collect your orchestra's auditionee data.
 - If you have participated in this process before, please note that this link changes year-to-year.
 - If you used the spreadsheet referenced above, you will be able to copy-and-paste the totals directly from the 'Summary' tab into the submission form.



- If you are interested, below are some helpful resources for collecting self-reported demographic information:

[Collecting self-reported demographic information: what questions should you ask in surveys?](#)

[3 Must-Dos for Collecting Employee Demographic Data Beyond Race and Gender – Senior Executive](#)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- We will only be able to include your orchestra's data in our aggregated summary report if your orchestra has a minimum response rate of **80%**.
 - This minimum response rate provides confidence that your orchestra's data set is a suitably representative sample of your auditionees, allowing for improved interpretations of the findings and trends.
- When submitting or independently collecting this data, please only mark that auditionees selected 'Prefer not to disclose' if they submitted the survey and specifically chose that option. If auditionees did not submit the survey, do not include them in the totals for 'Prefer not to disclose' - they should not be included in your data set.
 - Similarly, if auditionees partially completed the survey and left either of the demographic questions blank, do not include them in the totals for 'Prefer not to disclose' for that demographic category. They should only be included in the totals for 'Prefer not to disclose' if they specifically selected that option, not if the question was left blank.
 - Please note that these guidelines for the use of the 'Prefer not to disclose' options may affect your orchestra's response rate; however, this will provide a dataset which is more accurately representative of your auditionees.
- We **strongly recommend** collecting audition applicant demographic data prior to the day of the audition. For example, a link to the Acceptd survey could be sent to applicants when they submit their initial application materials. We believe this timeframe will encourage more applicants to share their demographic information and won't add to audition-day anxiety.
- We **strongly recommend** including the following information in any communication about the survey:
"These questions are entirely voluntary, and **participating will not affect your audition in any way**. If you choose to participate, you can elect to remain completely anonymous, and the survey will take less than 5 minutes to complete."
- If you are unable to collect your auditionee's demographic information during this season's auditions or if you would like to opt out of this research project, please let us know directly by emailing inclusivestages@americanorchestras.org.



INSIGHTS & IDEAS FOR SUCCESS

- Adjust your messaging/reminder schedule based on the number of submissions that you have received. As an example, if you have 50 auditionees for a particular audition, but only 2 individuals have submitted their demographics, you may consider sending additional reminders to your auditionees.
- Consider when and where in the audition/application process auditionees are asked demographic questions. Many orchestras have had success by incorporating the questions directly into their application materials, without differentiating between the application questions and the demographic questions.

“We have made the survey questions for demographics attached to the actual process of applying to the audition with great success - we let all candidates know that all demographic questions are optional ... This has given us a very high response on the survey rate ... Once the applicant is on the survey page - [we] find they usually won't skip it even if they'd be inclined to if it was a separate but optional part of the application process. With ours - it's all in one and most people fill it out in its entirety.”

- Group 4 orchestra; 100% response rate

- Some orchestras have had success by requiring responses to the questions but ensuring that applicants have an option for non-disclosure.

“All prospective employees (staff and musicians) apply online ... and this application process includes a non-optional demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire does have "prefer not to disclose" options. This ensures a 100% response rate from applicants.”

- Group 1 orchestra; 100% response rate

MORE QUESTIONS?

Thank you again for engaging in this critical work. If you have additional questions about the Audition Applicant Demographics Survey, please contact inclusivestages@americanorchestras.org.



Communication Templates

DIRECT INVITATION TO AUDITIONEES

From: Orchestra's Personnel Manager, General Manager, or other

Dear [Auditionee's Name],

We are committed to building an inclusive culture here at the [Orchestra Name]. As part of our commitment, we are participating in a research project led by the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS) and utilized by Inclusive Stages, a program of the League of American Orchestras. This research initiative involves asking audition applicants to participate in a voluntary demographics survey, to help us better understand the diversity of our audition applicant pool and improve our efforts to create a more inclusive orchestra.

We encourage you to participate in this brief survey. If you choose to participate, **you can elect to remain completely anonymous**, and the survey will take less than 5 minutes to complete. In addition, each demographic question includes an option to not disclose the information. Your response will be combined with submissions from auditionees at other orchestras across North America and will only be reported in aggregate.

COMPLETE SURVEY

[Insert Survey Link]

Please note that this survey is entirely voluntary, and **participating will not affect your audition in any way**. We sincerely appreciate your time and your participation in this national initiative. For more information about this initiative, please visit the NAAS [website](#) or the Inclusive Stages [website](#).

Thank you for helping us build a stronger, more inclusive [Orchestra Name] together. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you,

Name
Title



TEMPLATE LANGUAGE FOR APPLICATION MATERIALS

Voluntary Demographics Questions

We are committed to building an inclusive culture here at the [Orchestra Name], and as part of our commitment, we are participating in a research project led by the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS) and the League of American Orchestras. This research initiative involves asking audition applicants to participate in a voluntary demographics survey, to help us better understand the diversity of our audition applicant pool and improve our efforts to create a more inclusive orchestra.

We invite you to participate in this initiative as part of our application process.

Please Note:

- These questions are entirely voluntary. (Only include if applicable)
- Your information will be combined with data from auditionees at other orchestras across North America and will only be reported to participating orchestras in aggregate.
- Your information will be anonymized prior to reporting.
- **Your decision to participate or decline will not impact your audition in any way.**

[Insert Survey Questions]

You can find more information about this initiative by visiting the NAAS [website](#) or the Inclusive Stages [website](#).

Thank you for helping us build a stronger, more inclusive [Orchestra Name] together. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.



REMINDER EMAIL

From: Orchestra's Personnel Manager, General Manager, or other

Dear [Auditionee's Name],

We hope this message finds you well. We recently invited you to participate in our voluntary demographics survey, and we just wanted to send a quick reminder that your participation would be greatly appreciated!

As a reminder, **you can choose to remain completely anonymous**, and the survey will only take a few minutes to complete. In addition, each demographic question includes an option to not disclose the information. Your response helps us better understand the diversity within our audition applicant pool and contributes to larger efforts to improve representation across the orchestra field.

If you haven't yet had a chance, please consider taking the survey.

COMPLETE SURVEY

[Insert Survey Link]

Your participation is completely voluntary, and **your audition will not be impacted by your decision to participate in any way**. You can find more information about this initiative by visiting the National Alliance for Audition Support [website](#) or the Inclusive Stages [website](#).

Thank you again for your time and consideration!

Kind regards,

Name

Title