

Racial and Cultural Equity and Inclusion Commitment

The Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO) believes that the principles of inclusion and equity for people of all races, ages, nationalities, cultures, genders, religions, orientations, and abilities make for more meaningful, creative, and impactful shared music experiences between orchestras and their communities. We support orchestras and ensembles in their work to bring music into the world that uplifts, challenges, unites, and heals.

ACSO was founded in 1969 with a mission to facilitate the exchange of artistic and management best practices and build a network between orchestras in the state. Today, that facilitation and network still exist with professional development around orchestra management fundamentals, such as fundraising, marketing, operations, and board development. But the way we carry out our mission has evolved since 1969 as the world around us has evolved, and as part of that evolution it is imperative that ACSO incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion values, principles, and work into our member services.

ACSO stands for equity and inclusion. We value and celebrate the rich histories, cultures, and diversity found throughout the state of California and we commit to continue investing in training, resources, and services for the orchestral field around diversity, racial equity, and inclusion in audience engagement, artistic planning, and organizational management and governance.

As a leader and convener that advocates for and influences orchestras and music ensembles in California and beyond, we are embarking on a learning journey around the principles of racial equity and inclusion. We are making a commitment to educate ourselves and our membership network about historic racial inequities, and the intersection with other types of inequities, within the classical music field, and how those inequities continue to contribute to systemic injustice. And we are making a commitment to help break down current and future barriers to equity, participation, and inclusion.

As such, we will:

- Internally educate and train our staff and board and recognize that we must be open to continually learning about racial equity issues within the performing arts sector.
- Develop a common vocabulary and understanding about the meaning of words like “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion.”
- Ensure that racial and cultural equity work is a fundamental component of our organizational structure, policies, planning, and practices and model the process of that work for our members.
- Examine the composition of our staff and board, and implement hiring and recruiting practices that will amplify diversity.
- Examine our member services portfolio with a focus on investing in training, information, peer-to-peer learning and sharing, and resources that will aid our membership in their own racial equity work.
- Recognize that this is a living and organic commitment that should be examined and revised on an ongoing basis.