

ACSO Community Impact Award Nomination 2026

Has your orchestra launched a program, partnership, concert series, or initiative that is making a meaningful difference in your community? Are you responding to a local need, expanding access, strengthening inclusion and belonging, or building new relationships that increase your organization's relevance? If so, we invite you to apply for the **ACSO Community Impact Award**.

This award recognizes an ACSO organizational member who demonstrates thoughtful and innovative community impact. We encourage applications from orchestras of all budget sizes — from volunteer-led community ensembles to large regional institutions. Initiatives may be new or ongoing; what matters most is the clarity of purpose and demonstrated impact.

At ACSO, we believe orchestras play a vital civic role. When orchestras listen deeply, collaborate authentically, and respond to evolving community needs, they build trust, strengthen partnerships, and reinforce their long-term sustainability. This award celebrates organizations that are leading with that vision.

We are especially interested in work that expands who feels welcomed and represented in the orchestral experience, and that strengthens connection both inside and outside the concert hall.

What Counts as Community Impact?

Community impact may include (but is not limited to):

- Partnerships with schools, health organizations, cultural groups, or community-based nonprofits
- Programs designed to reach new or historically underrepresented audiences
- Accessibility initiatives that reduce financial, physical, or cultural barriers
- Neighborhood-based or site-specific performances
- Music and wellness collaborations
- Bilingual or culturally responsive programming
- Creative responses to a specific community need

Large-scale initiatives and smaller, local efforts are equally valued.

Eligibility

- Must be a current ACSO organizational member
- Application must be submitted by a board member, executive director, or senior staff leader

Application Process

- Complete the online application by Friday, May 15, 2026

- Applications are reviewed by the ACSO Awards Committee (staff, board, and members)
- The recipient will be notified and publicly announced in late June 2026
- The award will be presented at the 2026 ACSO Annual Conference (August 6-8, Santa Rosa)

The awardee will receive a customizable press release to share with local media.

Awards are based on the strength, clarity, and demonstrable impact of the initiative described.

The ACSO Awards Committee is comprised of ACSO staff, board, and members. When they complete their review and selection process, the nominator and winner will be notified, and the public announcement to the field will be made in June 2026. ACSO will provide the awardee's organization with a press release that can be customized to send to local media.

These awards are given solely based on the quality of the application and supporting materials. We encourage applicants to take their time and be intentional and specific when answering the questions on the award application.

Application Questions

1. Organization name and mailing address
2. Submitter name, title, email, and phone number
3. Describe your community impact initiative:
 - What community need or opportunity does it address?
 - Who does it serve, and how were they engaged?
 - What measurable outcomes or changes have resulted?
 - Include community partners, if applicable.
4. How does this initiative align with your organization's mission and long-term vision?
5. How do you measure its impact and sustainability?
6. Share a brief testimonial from a participant, partner, or community member.