

ACSO Emerging Professional Award Nomination 2026

ACSO recognizes the importance of investing in future leaders from all backgrounds to ensure the vitality of the orchestra field. The Emerging Professional Award honors an individual in their first five years in the orchestra/classical music field who has already made meaningful contributions to their organization—regardless of budget size—and demonstrates strong potential for leadership and continued professional growth.

This individual has achieved early career success, helped advance their organization’s mission, and is making a positive impact in their community. They show a commitment to learning and self-development, contribute new ideas, support colleagues, and challenge the status quo. They champion inclusion and belonging, strengthen organizational culture, and demonstrate leadership that advances both people and programs.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominee:

- Must be in their first five years in the orchestra/classical music field (no age requirement) and may work in any area of performing arts management/administration
- Must be employed (full-time or part-time) by an ACSO member organization
- Must have made a significant contribution to their organization and/or the field (with specific examples)

ACSO is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and encourages nominations that reflect a wide range of ages, genders, and ethnicities.

Nominator:

- May be a board member, executive director, or direct supervisor of the nominee
- Cannot be the nominee, a family member, or a direct report of the nominee
- Must be well-acquainted with the nominee and able to speak to their qualifications and accomplishments

NOMINATION & REVIEW PROCESS

Nominations must be submitted online by **Friday, May 15, 2026**.

Applications are reviewed by the ACSO Awards Committee (staff, board, and members). The nominator and recipient will be notified following the review process, with a public announcement in June 2026. ACSO will provide a customizable press release for local media.

The recipient will receive a **\$500 cash award**, underwritten by Dean McVay, ACSO Board Emeritus, and will be recognized at the **2026 Annual Conference in Santa Rosa (August 6–8, 2026)**.

Awards are based solely on the strength of the application and supporting materials. Nominators are encouraged to be thoughtful, specific, and thorough in their responses.

NOMINATION QUESTIONS

1. Nominator Name, Title, Org
2. Nominator Email and Phone
3. Nominee Name, Title, Org
4. Nominee Email and Phone
5. Nominee Home Mailing Address

Essay Questions:

- Describe the nominee's significant contributions, including:
 - **Accomplishments:** quality of work, achievements, innovation, initiative, and leadership
 - **Impact and visibility:** how colleagues, leadership, community partners, audiences, and participants benefit from the nominee's work
- Assess the nominee's potential for future leadership and continued excellence

Supporting Materials:

- Up to two letters of endorsement (from partners, clients, patrons, participants, or others impacted by the nominee's work), including specific examples of accomplishments, impact, and potential
- High-resolution photo of the nominee
- Short bio of the nominee