

ACSO Executive Leadership Award Nomination/Application – 2026

The Executive Leadership Award recognizes a chief executive officer, executive director, or managing director of an ACSO member organization for extraordinary leadership in the orchestra/classical music field over the past three to five years.

This award honors a leader who advances their organization’s mission through a compelling vision, effective strategy, and the ability to unite teams to meet the evolving demands of live orchestral performance. This individual has strengthened their organization’s relevance and impact, positioning it as an indispensable part of its community as audiences diversify and change.

This leader fosters a culture of innovation, creativity, and accountability, empowering staff to do their best work while cultivating future leaders for the field. They align artistic and administrative priorities and ensure the organization reflects and serves its unique, diverse, and evolving community—prioritizing accessibility, inclusion, and belonging.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominee:

- Must be a leader (CEO, executive director, or managing director) of a current ACSO member organization
- Must be a paid employee (full-time or part-time)
- Must demonstrate meaningful organizational impact, including strengthening and transforming the organization they lead (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, staff member, music director, musician, volunteer, peer from another organization, or a self-nomination
- 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.

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.

The recipient will be recognized at the **2026 Annual Conference in Santa Rosa (August 6–8, 2026)**.

NOMINATION QUESTIONS

Note: All responses should include specific examples and reflect the nominee's work at their current organization.

- Nominator name, title, organization
- Nominator email and phone
- Nominee name, title, organization
- Nominee email and phone
- Nominee home mailing address

Essay Questions:

- How does the nominee create and communicate a compelling vision that inspires others? (~250 words)
- How did the nominee lead innovation, adaptation, and continued relevance? (~250 words)
- How does the nominee champion community, accessibility, and belonging? (~250 words)
- How has the nominee identified and cultivated future leaders in the field?
- How does the nominee align staff, board, and musicians and integrate operational, financial, technological, and artistic resources to advance the mission? (~250 words)

Supporting Materials:

- High-resolution photo of the nominee
- Short bio of the nominee