



Executive Director Opportunity Guide

<https://cyso.org>

About Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras



With a rich history dating to 1946, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras (CYSO) is committed to educating, encouraging, and empowering student musicians so that they may pursue personal excellence both on and off the stage. Bringing together young musicians from diverse backgrounds in a collaborative environment that develops self-confidence, teamwork, and leadership, CYSO provides one of the most comprehensive music training programs in the country that inspires both musical and personal growth.

Inspiring and cultivating personal excellence through music.

As one of the country's leading youth orchestras, CYSO serves nearly 800 young people (ages six to eighteen) from across the Chicagoland area and neighboring states. CYSO students perform in Chicago's great concert venues from Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center to the Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park and the historic Studebaker Theater at the Fine Arts Building. CYSO students have had the opportunity to collaborate with Yo-Yo Ma, Anthony and Demarre McGill, Ben Folds, and Justin Timberlake, as well as perform with Chance the Rapper on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert. The students in the top orchestra tour internationally every other year, performing for global audiences and dignitaries as ambassadors for not only Chicago, but the nation.

Now in its 76th season, CYSO is committed to providing high-quality musical and educational experiences to its students. CYSO has grown from one orchestra to a comprehensive music training destination with 12 on-site ensembles ranging from full symphony orchestras, string ensembles, jazz orchestra, and steelpan orchestras; chamber music and composition programs; 5 school-based programs; and robust community engagement activities.

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CYSO teaches through:

- **Full Orchestras**
 - Symphony Orchestra
 - Philharmonic Orchestra
 - Concert Orchestra
 - Debut Orchestra
- **String Orchestras**
 - Accelerando Strings
 - Preparatory Strings
 - Overture Strings
- **Steel Orchestras**
 - Kaiso Steel Orchestra
 - Junior Steel Orchestra
 - Groove Steel Ensemble
 - Jumbies
- **Jazz Orchestra**
- **Chamber Music**
- **Composition Seminar**



By increasing access to high-quality music education, CYSO is developing the future of music for decades to come, and creating leaders who will impact the world. Collectively, CYSO students receive nearly 45,000 hours of instruction annually from Chicago's most respected professional musicians and educators, and share their passion for music through the CYSO's community engagement programs, which include opportunities for service learning for all high school musicians. While expenses have increased in recent years, CYSO has kept the tuition affordable and has expanded the financial assistance program to ensure that cost is never a barrier to participation.

In 2022, 100% of CYSO's graduating seniors were accepted to college. Of these graduates, 60% went on to pursue degrees in music or music education, with the other 40% pursuing degrees in all disciplines of math, science, and humanities. CYSO alumni attend a wide range of schools across the US, including public 2 and 4-year institutions, music conservatories, and private universities. They join the growing network of successful CYSO alumni, with widely ranging careers that include positions in major orchestras, as well as doctors, lawyers, teachers, bankers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. This is a testament to CYSO's efforts to both nurture the extraordinary musical talent of young people and, through the process of music making and performing, develop life skills such as self-confidence, teamwork,

creativity, resilience, curiosity, and compassion. These skills will stay with CYSO's alumni for a lifetime, staying true to CYSO's mission of inspiring and cultivating personal excellence through music.

CYSO's dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is inseparable from its commitment to musical excellence. Motivated by this dedication, CYSO is committed to prioritizing EDI in all aspects of its team, performances, and community inclusion, and believes that these values are essential to achieving the highest level of excellence throughout the organization. From commissioning and performing music by a diverse pool of composers, to undertaking EDI learning by the artistic leaders, staff, and board, CYSO recognizes that diversity all across the organization is crucial to creating an equitable and inclusive environment for its students and families. By fostering a diverse and inclusive community, CYSO can draw upon a wide range of perspectives and experiences, which leads to dynamic outcomes for students, audiences, and the broader community. CYSO regularly participates in antiracism, anti-bias, and other EDI training and actively seek candidates for all roles who are equipped and committed to furthering this work.

The Opportunity: Executive Director



Reporting directly to the 23-member board of directors, the Executive Director (ED) is CYSO's chief advocate, networker, and ambassador, cultivating new donor relationships and enhancing the organization's profile and visibility with local, national, and global audiences and partners. The ED will be a collaborative and forward-looking individual who will work in tandem with CYSO's leadership team and musical talent to identify new partnerships and training opportunities to further develop skills and enhance the educational experience of CYSO musicians. The ED will leverage all possible resources in partnership with the board of directors, families, artistic staff, alumni, and the greater Chicago Metro community to propel CYSO to new levels and ensure it remains a best-in-class program, available to all.

The ED will be responsible for all areas of organizational management, directly leading the administrative operations and providing general leadership to the 40-member team, 20 of which are part-time. The ED has four direct reports and up to 13 total administrative staff. The Music Director, also reporting to the board of directors, oversees the artistic team (conductors and coaches). The FY22 operating budget is approximately \$2M. Roughly 50 percent of the revenue comes from contributed sources (individuals, corporations, foundations, and organizations).

Performance Objectives

Strategic and Visionary Leadership

- Develop a unified vision for CYSO's future as a best-in-class organization for musical training and youth development. In partnership with the Music Director, innovate and envision new standards that further CYSO's excellence in the fields of youth music education and performing arts.
- Codify, advance, and transform CYSO's EDI work, prioritizing initiatives that create an equitable and inclusive environment for diverse groups of young people, families, audiences, staff, and board members.
- Elevate the visibility of CYSO's work on local, regional, and national levels and expand community support. Position CYSO as a leader in youth orchestras by serving as CYSO's primary brand ambassador.
- Guide the board of directors in creation of a strategic plan for continued growth with a focus on key values and revenue needs for a sustainable future.
- Ensure sustainability, fiscal resilience, and organizational strength through solid infrastructure that balances programmatic and operational needs.
- Engage the past and present board members, CYSO alumni, past and current families, and supporter networks to further the mission, vision, and values of CYSO.

Philanthropy, Revenue, and Sustainability

- Lead a culture of philanthropy and investment with and to all constituencies. Increase and strengthen donor relationships (alumni, parents, music lovers, and youth advocates). Cultivate new investors and ambassadors that will extend the reach and message of CYSO.
- Strengthen and build connections and advocate in the Chicago community and beyond to increase visibility and take CYSO to the next level in fundraising efforts. This includes but is not limited to individuals, institutions, foundations, public leaders, and supporters.

- Drive the newly established endowment campaign, launched in 2022. Identify and secure multiyear funding opportunities to sustain and grow from current levels of support. Cultivate corporate partnerships and investments that uplift the value of music education and youth development.
- Partner with each board member to embrace a role in ambassadorship and philanthropy.
- Explore and innovate options for additional earned revenue streams to augment operations and tuition-based funding.

Management, Operations, and Programming

- Create cohesion among all groups that make CYSO successful: the students, their families, artistic leaders, staff, and the board.
- Ensure stability by evaluating the current staffing infrastructure to promote streamlined operations and future growth.
- Guide internal operations through a strong leadership team and ensure the systems and policies are in place to manage the entire staff through the lens of flexibility, openness to suggestions, inclusivity, and the ability to resolve/mitigate conflict.
- Explore and evaluate continued expansion of the programming partnership with Chicago Public Schools and other partners to leverage collaboration opportunities to continually strengthen CYSO's reach and impact. Ensure ongoing access and equitable offerings for music education.
- Promote a strong internal culture that mirrors and supports the external image of excellence and achievement. Facilitate and encourage collaborative relationships between team members across functional areas.
- Foster strong community among all CYSO students, their parents, and alumni.

The Qualified Candidate



CYSO is searching for a collaborative and fearless leader committed to the highest level of leadership, possessing exceptional interpersonal skills and a unique ability to attend to a wide range of constituency needs. The selected individual will be a person of high energy, enthusiasm, and integrity, with a deep commitment to music education and the development of youth musicians. The ED must be equipped with a multi-faceted understanding of the changing landscape around equity and inclusion in classical music and youth development and bring an authentic commitment to transforming CYSO's EDI work. The ED is forward-looking and goal-oriented with exceptional strategic planning and people management skills, as well as abilities in fund development and leadership. Relationship-building skills are key to delivering results through patience, perseverance, and consensus-building.

Specific Requirements Include:

- Management and team-leading experience, preferably in nonprofit music organizations, arts education, or youth development programs.
- Passion for the CYSO's mission to inspire and cultivate personal excellence through music.
- Deep appreciation for symphonic music as well as the expanded definition of the 'orchestral' experience that CYSO offers.
- Ability to articulate a clear vision and plan for continued growth and impact of the organization.
- Skilled in challenging current assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Emotional intelligence to know when to push and innovate, with an unwavering commitment to enhancing impact.
- Success and enthusiasm for seeking investors and philanthropic donors. Direct experience with donor management, cultivation, and solicitation is desired.
- Strong leadership skills in general management, culture-building, organizational leadership, human resources, finance, and external relations, with a style that empowers others to lead in their areas of expertise.
- Strength in organizing and motivating others to achieve results while creating a sense of order, direction, and active participation among a variety of stakeholders.
- Experience in working with a broad coalition of diverse stakeholders. Ability to inspire musicians, parents, donors, alumni, guest artists, staff, community partners, board members, and public leaders, including Chicago Public Schools and students who have limited access to the arts.
- A Bachelor's degree is required; relevant advanced degree or equivalent preferred.

How To Apply



CYSO is an equal opportunity employer. BIPOC, trans and gender-nonconforming people, women, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Compensation will be commensurate with experience and skills up to \$130,000, along with the potential for performance-based bonus and continuing professional education opportunities. A competitive compensation package includes health, dental, and life insurance including short-term and long-term disability coverages, FSA, vacation, holiday, year-end time off, and sick pay, flexible work hours. Additionally, a retirement savings plan with an employer contribution after one year of full-time employment is provided.

CYSO requires that all staff are vaccinated for COVID-19.

To assure the confidential tracking of all applicants, no applications will be accepted via email. All inquiries will be held in strict confidence. All candidate-submitted materials and credentials will be reviewed for consistency and accuracy. Candidates can expect that KEES will verify employment/academic/background information both in the screening process and for the finalist(s) in a formal background check.

This search is being managed by Heather Eddy, President and CEO, and Randi Blasutti, Project Coordinator of KEES. Questions may be addressed to rblasutti@kees2success.com.

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About KEES

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