

2023

2024

MEMBER CENSUS



El Sistema USA®

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 2025

Dear El Sistema USA® Members and Partners,

In 2024, El Sistema USA conducted our bi-annual census to gather data from the 2023–2024 school year. The census was distributed to 142 member programs, with 84 responses—a strong 60% response rate. Data collection ran from October 2024 to May 2025, with analysis provided by Ward Analytics.

The findings tell an encouraging story: the El Sistema USA network continues to grow in both depth and breadth. From 2022 to 2024, the number of students served increased by 26%, with our membership now reaching more than **30,000 young people!**

This year's census also reflects our new Guiding Pillars—**High Quality Music Education, Equity and Access, and Holistic Impact**—alive and thriving across our network:

- **High Quality:** Programs provide an **average of 7 hours of weekly instruction**, demonstrating the intensive, high-dosage model that defines El Sistema USA.
- **Equity and Access:** Members continue to break down barriers to participation, offering **free tuition** and instruments, transportation, tutoring, meals, and more.
- **Holistic Impact:** **Two-thirds of programs offer paid internships and hire alumni**, creating intentional pathways for student leadership and career opportunities in music and beyond.

The data also highlights areas for growth. While 68% of respondents offer summer programming, most opportunities are limited to 1–3 weeks and part-day schedules—leaving a significant gap during a critical time for student engagement and musical progress.

Census findings also reveal that programs are often navigating uneven arts ecosystems: some serve as the only provider of music education in their partner schools, while others supplement or enhance existing school-based instruction.

Encouragingly, programs are showing strong staff retention—20% of staff have been with their programs for six or more years—and 60% of organizations employ in-school music teachers, signaling regular collaboration and connection with public school systems.

We are deeply grateful to every member program that contributed to this year's census. Together, this data tells a powerful story of our collective impact: a national coalition of music programs using music as a vehicle for opportunity, personal development, and community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Moulthrop".

Elizabeth Moulthrop
Executive Director
El Sistema USA®

A photograph of four young women standing in a row, each holding a flute. They are positioned in front of a large window that looks out onto a cityscape. The image has a semi-transparent red overlay. The woman on the far left wears a grey t-shirt with a '2nd ANNUAL INVITATIONAL FESTIVAL' logo. The woman next to her wears a dark hoodie with 'POLAR BEAR BASKETBALL' text. The woman in the center wears a light-colored hoodie. The woman on the far right wears a grey hoodie with 'austin soundwaves' and '2024 UNIVERSITY TX' text. The text 'MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW' is centered in large white letters.

MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

ESUSA MEMBERS AT A GLANCE

Types of Organizations

(n=82)

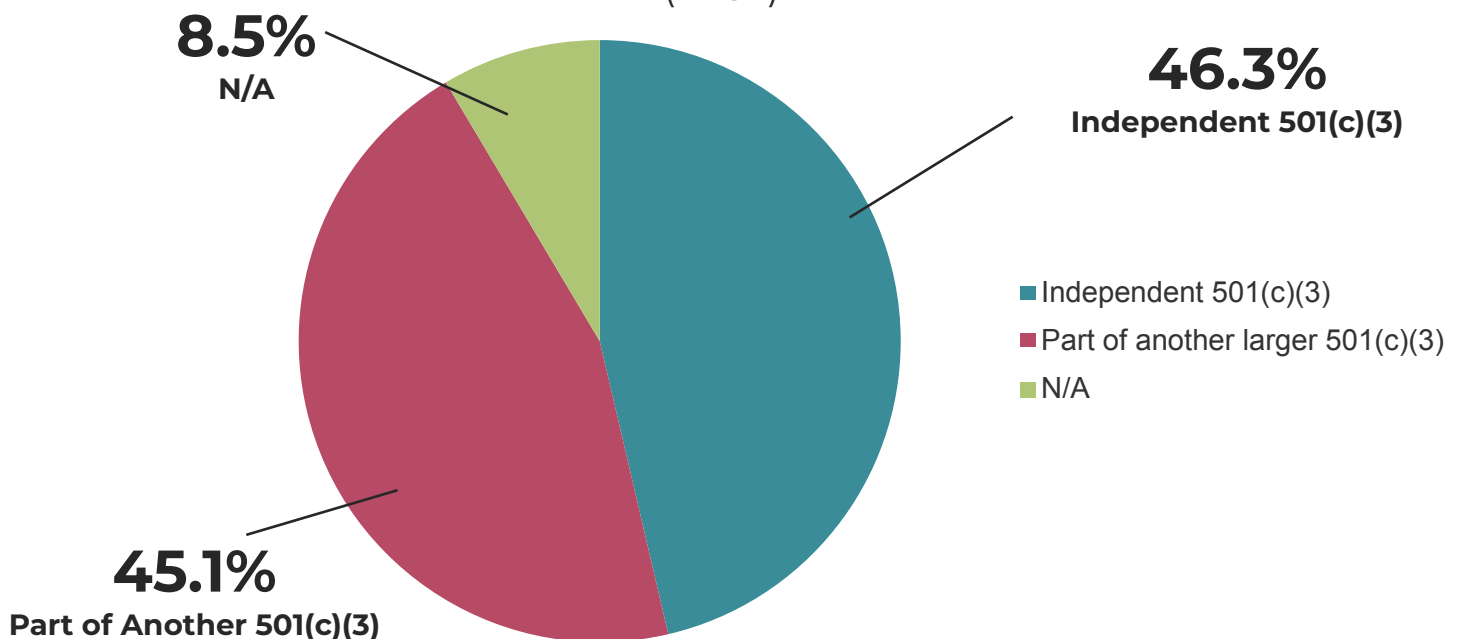
Throughout the report, “n” will be used to denote the number of member organizations whose responses were used to generate each graph and dataset.

142 Total ESUSA Members in 2024

The following table shows the breakdown of the 501(c)(3) status of each of the members that completed the 2023-2024 Census. Approximately half of the member organizations are independent and half are part of a larger org with a small number that is neither. Many of the programs that are neither are outside of the United States.

Organizational Profiles

(n=82)



Approximately half of the ESUSA member organizations are an independent 501(c)(3).

ESUSA MEMBERS AT A GLANCE

(n=81)

Membership Over The Years

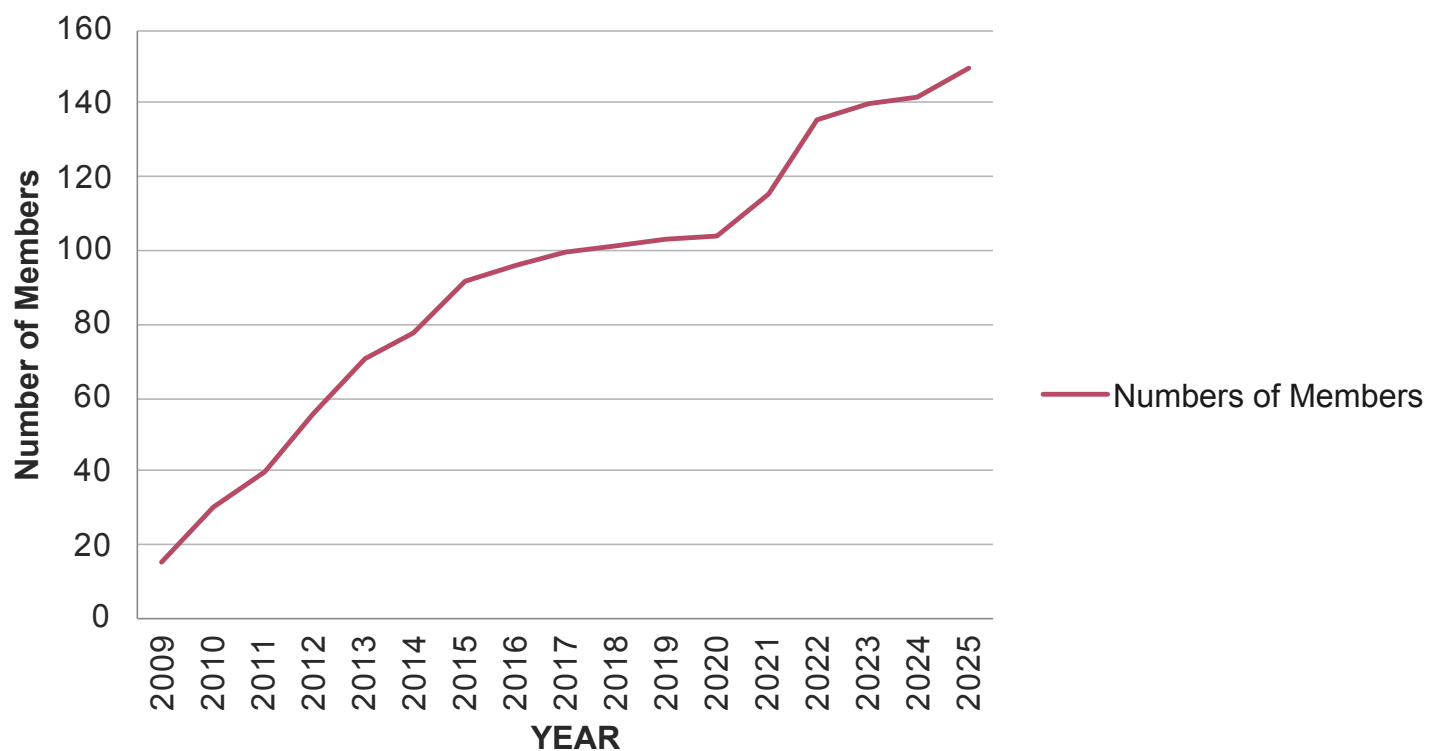


Photo Credit: Austin Soundwaves

ESUSA MEMBERS AT A GLANCE

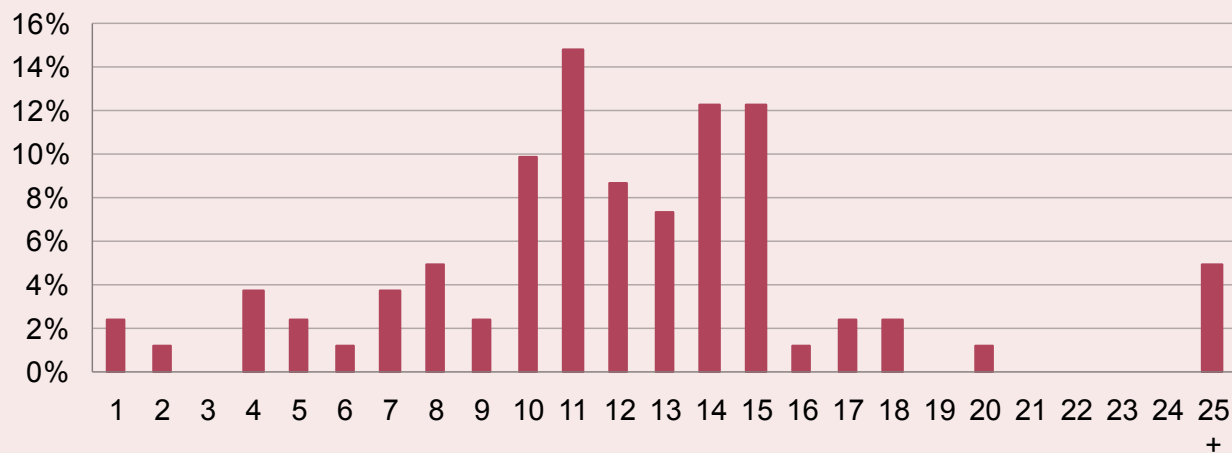
(n=81)

Years in Operation

Approximately **65% of the organizations have been in operation between 10-15 years**, **22% of organizations** for 9 years or less and **12%** for 16 years and above.

12 YEARS
average number of years
in operation

How many years has your El Sistema program operated? (n=81)



Percent of Programs by Years of Operation

A photograph of two young girls playing violins in a music room. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The girls are seated on white folding chairs, facing right, and are focused on their instruments. A music stand with sheet music is visible to the right. The background shows other students and musical equipment, slightly out of focus.

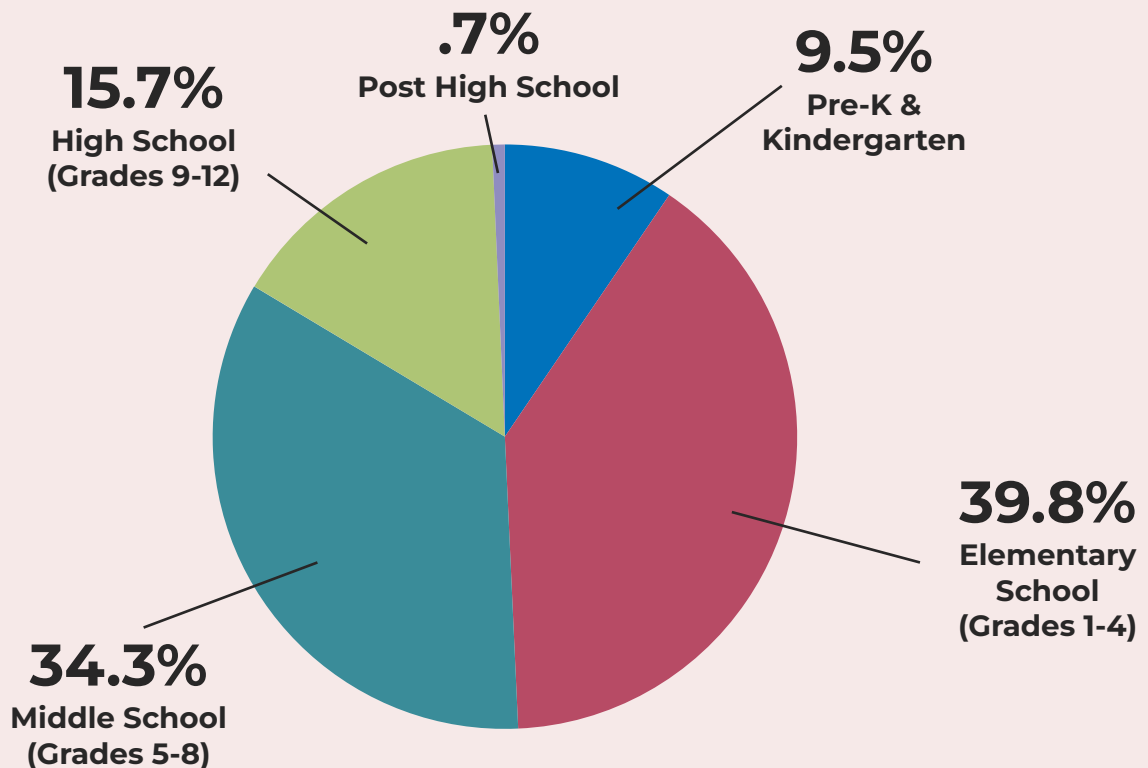
STUDENTS SERVED

31,787¹ Students in 2023-2024

26% Increase
in Students Served from 2022 to 2024

¹This is an estimate based upon data reported by organizations in the 2024 Census, the 2022 Census, and data obtained from Annual reports and communication with member org staff.

Students Served by Grade (n=77)



STUDENTS SERVED

Students Served by Gender

(n=77)

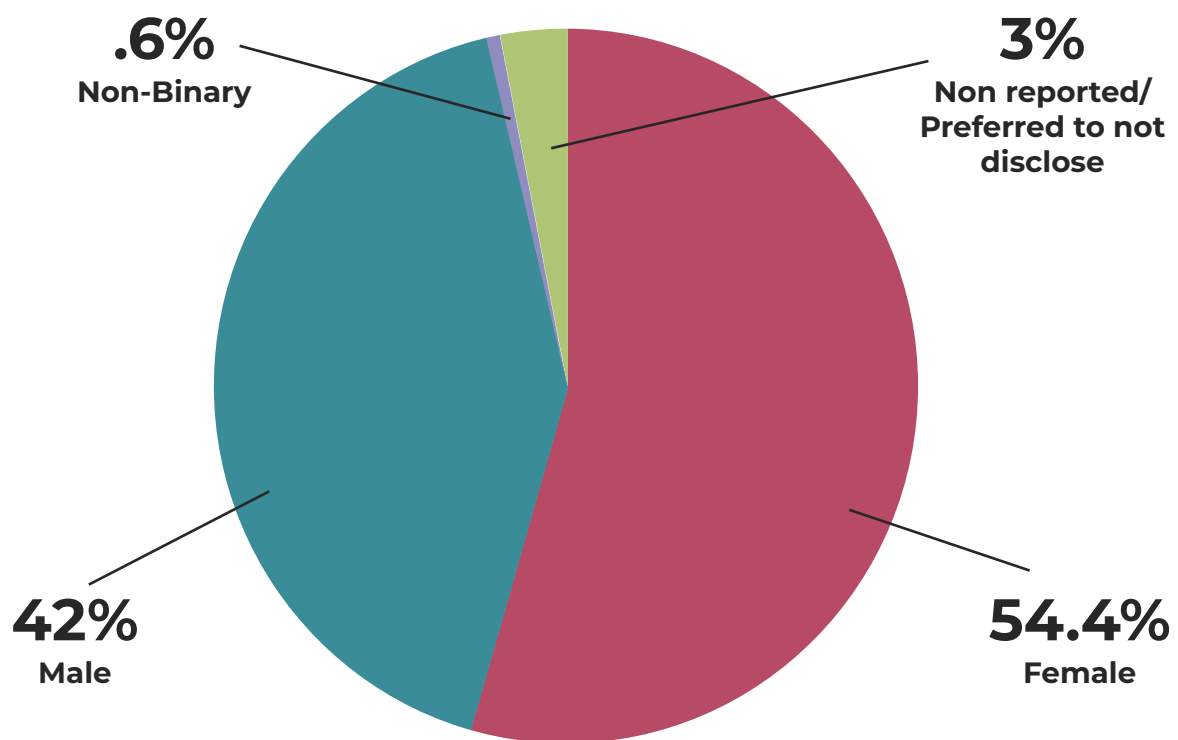
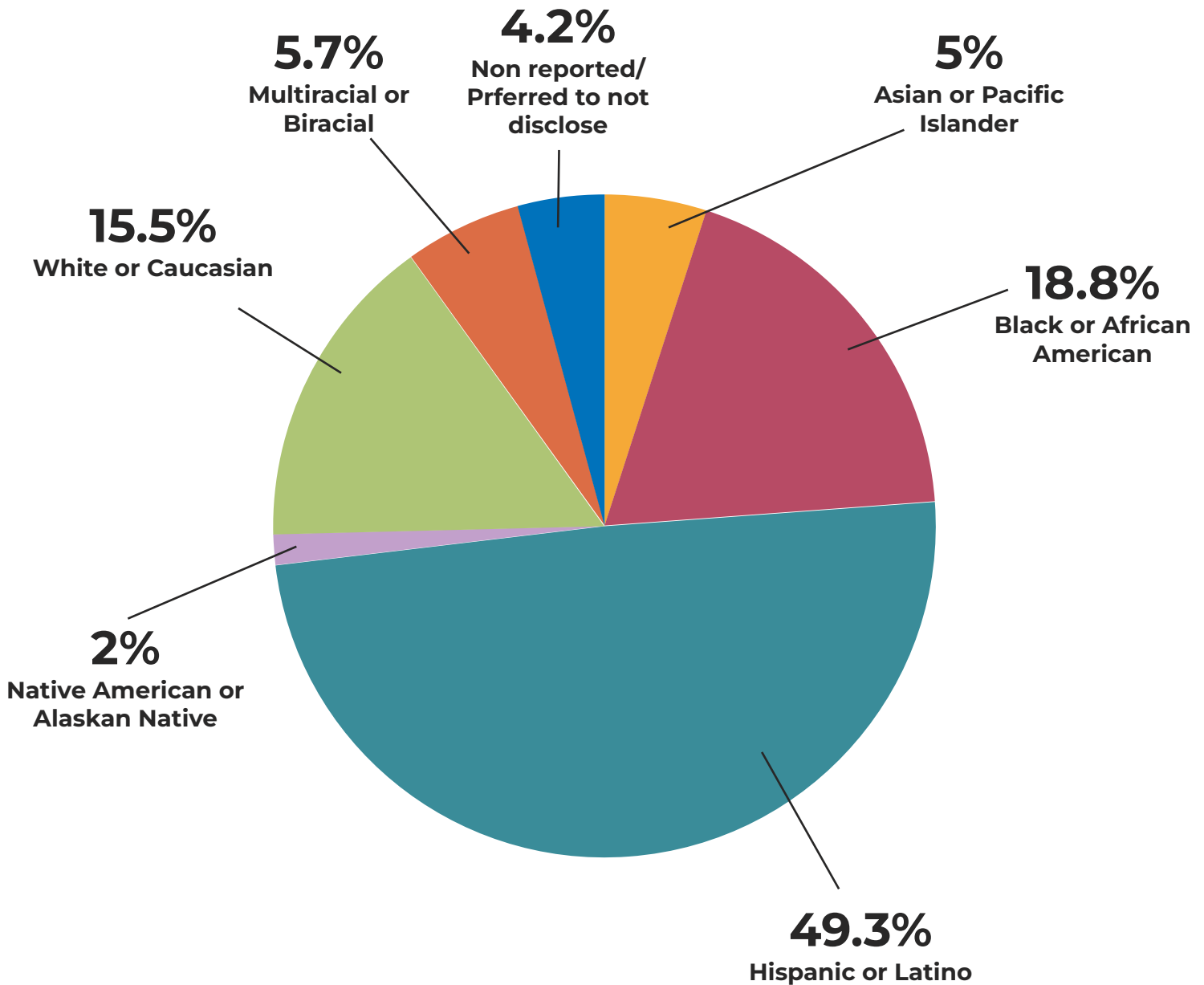


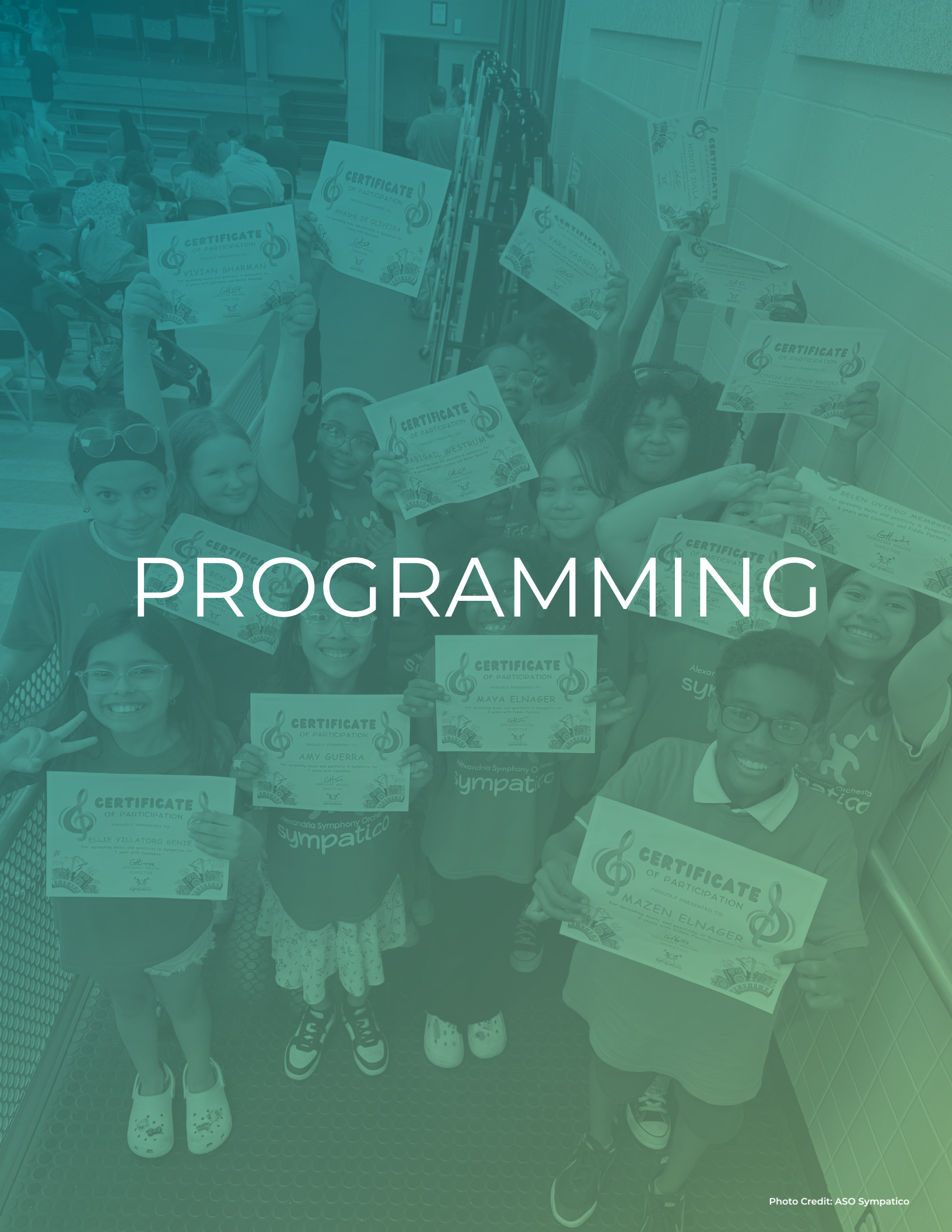
Photo Credit: Trenton Music Makers

STUDENTS SERVED

Students Served by Race/Ethnicity

(n=76)





PROGRAMMING

PROGRAMMING

Hours of Programming Per Week

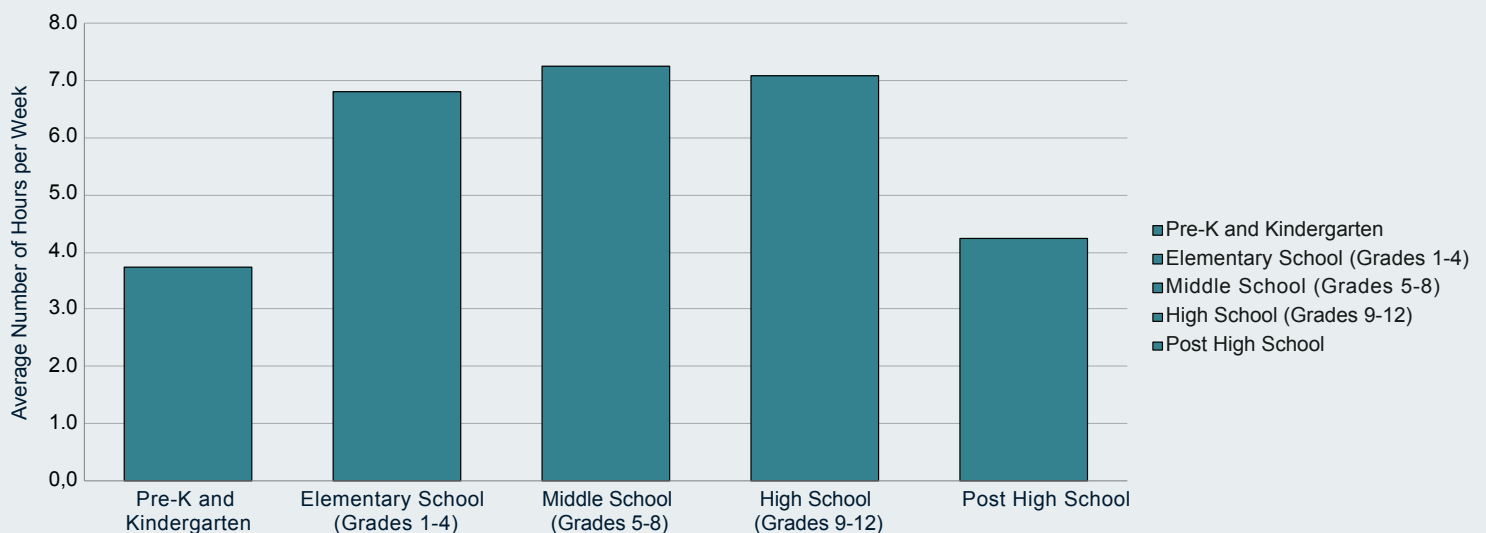
6.8 hours

Programs offered an average of 6.8 hours of instruction per week for elementary school students.

7 hours

Programs offered an average of 7 hours of instruction per week for middle and high school students.

Average Number of Hours Per Week by Grade (n=77)

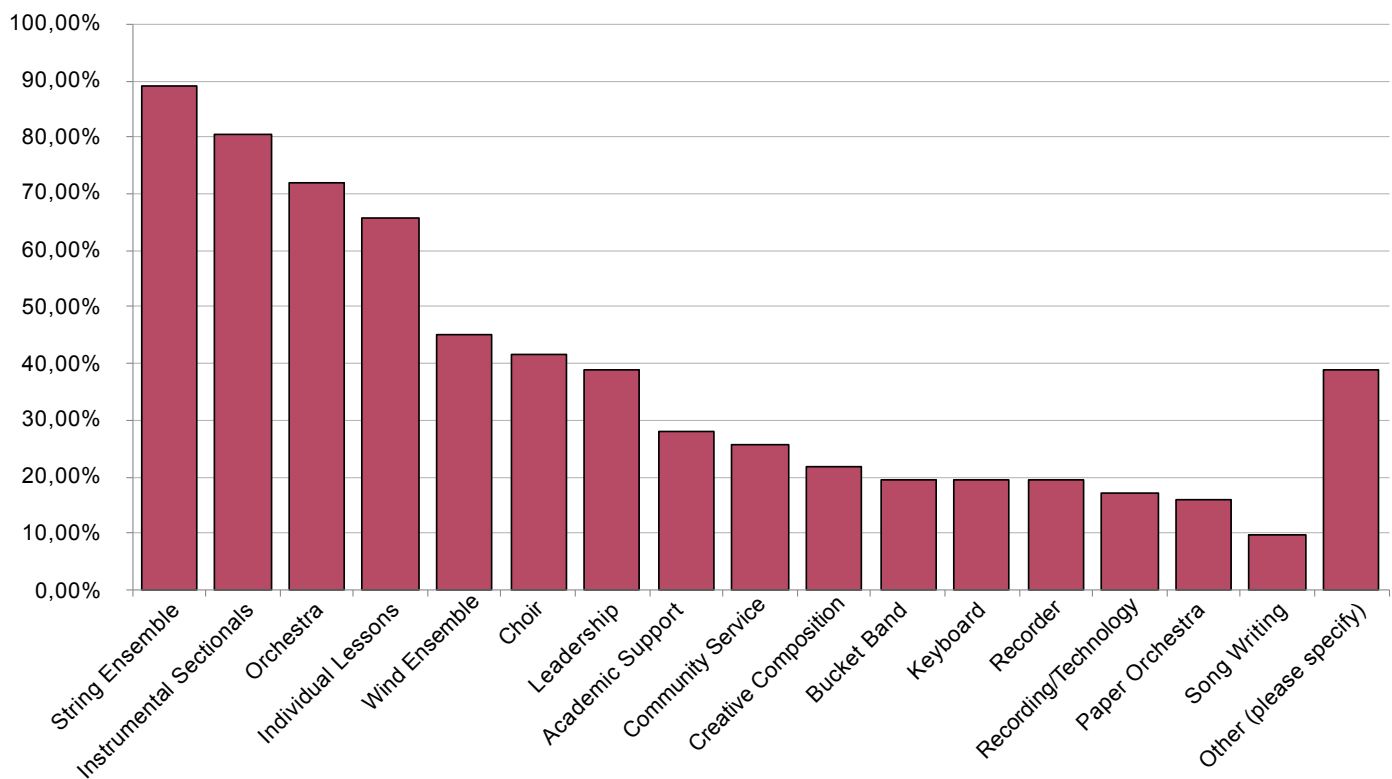


PROGRAMMING

Classes Offered (n=82)

El Sistema USA programs offer a wide variety of classes, instruments, and genres, from Song Writing to Wind Ensemble. The most common classes offered are String Ensemble, Instrumental Sectionals, Orchestra, and Individual Lessons. Many programs offer non musical classes such as academic support and leadership classes.

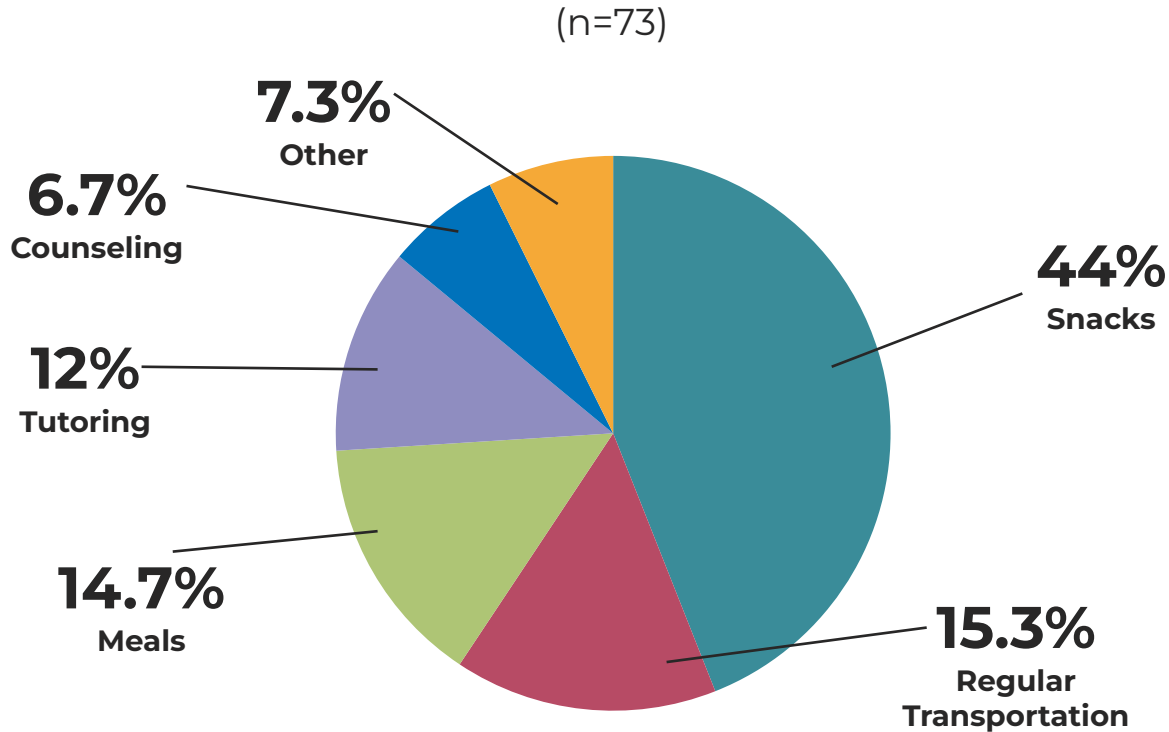
2023-2024 School Year Classes, Excluding Summer Offerings, n=82



PROGRAMMING

Additional Services Offered

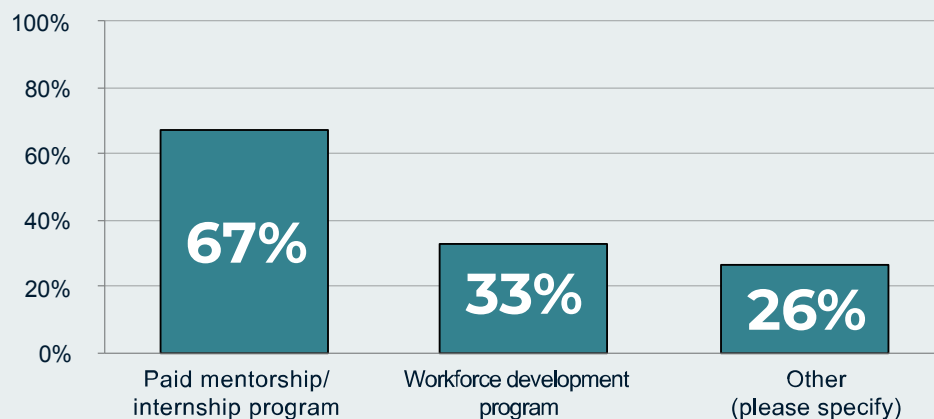
ESUSA programs offer much more than just music. Most programs offer snacks and about one-third offer transportation and meals. This aligns with the El Sistema USA pillars of Equity and Holistic Impact



Workforce Development and Internships

(n = 46)

67% of respondents provide paid internships to students and **33%** provide workforce development programs.



PROGRAMMING

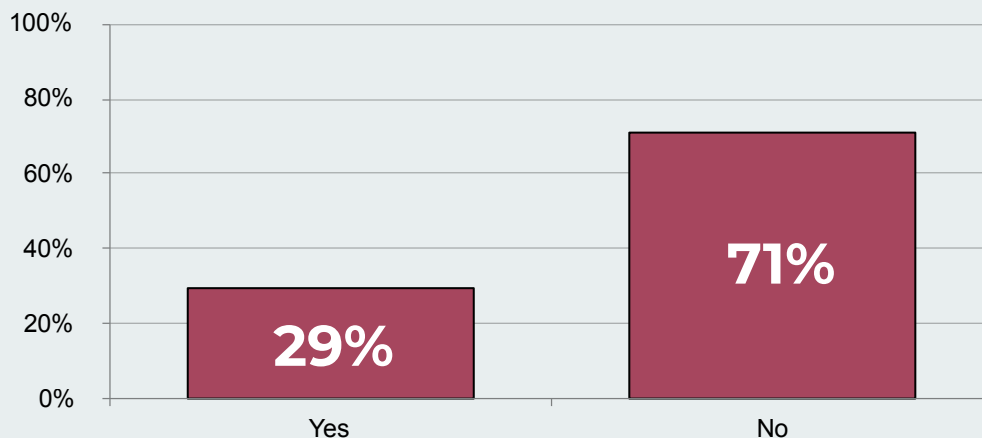
ESUSA Alumni (n=54)

67% of respondents employ alumni. This reflects the growing number of students graduating out of El Sistema USA programs and going into music related careers.

71% of programs

surveyed **do not charge annual tuition** or fees for their programming.

Do you charge tuition or fees for your program? (n=82)



29% of Programs

do charge some kind of tuition or fees and pricing models widely.

The range of tuition/fees was from **\$20** to **\$6,000**. The mode is **\$20**, the median is **\$263** and the average/mean is **\$890**.

PROGRAMMING

Summer Programming

68% of respondents offer summer programming for students.
(n=82)

The total reported students served in summer 2024 was 4,575.

Only 54 programs responded to this question and this number represents a small percentage of the overall programs in the ESUSA membership.

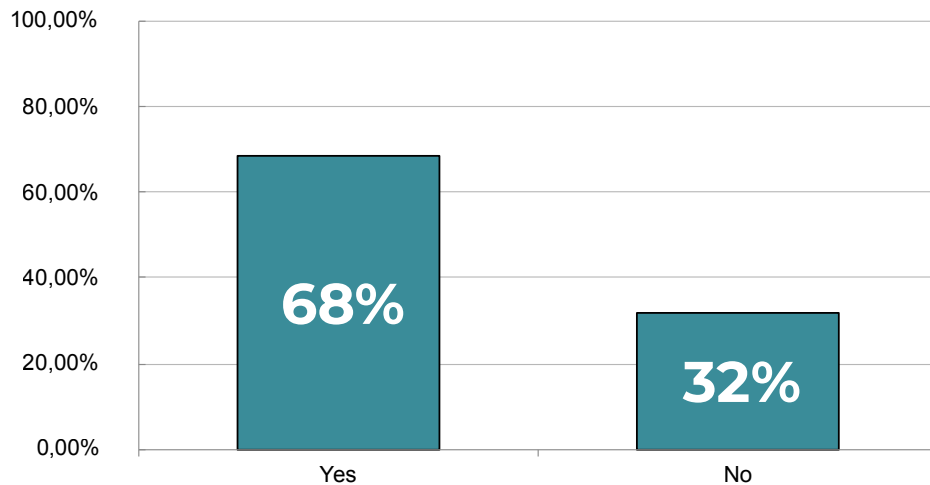
Despite being an important part of continued learning and engagement, many programs are not able to offer summer programming.



Photo Credit: ASO Sympatico

PROGRAMMING

Percent of Organizations that Offered Programming in Summer 2024 (n=82)



Similar to annual program tuition, summer tuition prices and models vary greatly.

The range of tuition/fees was from \$10 to \$1500. The mode is \$25, the median is \$100 and the average/mean is \$266.

Hours and Weeks of Summer Programming

(n =51)

Approximately **20% of programs provided 4 hours of programming per day** and approximately 16% provided 6 hours of programming per day.

The majority of programs ran summer programming either **4 or 5 days a week**.
Most programs ran 1-3 weeks of summer programming.

A group of five young people, three men and two women, are shown from the waist up, playing drums. They are wearing white t-shirts with a black logo that says "Play On Philly" and a target symbol. They are also wearing lanyards with ID badges. The person in the center has a badge that says "Tristian". They are standing in front of a brick wall. The image has a red overlay.

STAFFING

STAFFING

Teaching Staff

The first chart shows staffing averages based on different categories of staff members. It shows that most organizations rely on part time staff, contractors, and volunteer labor with fewer full time staff.

Average Number of Staff Members (n=74)

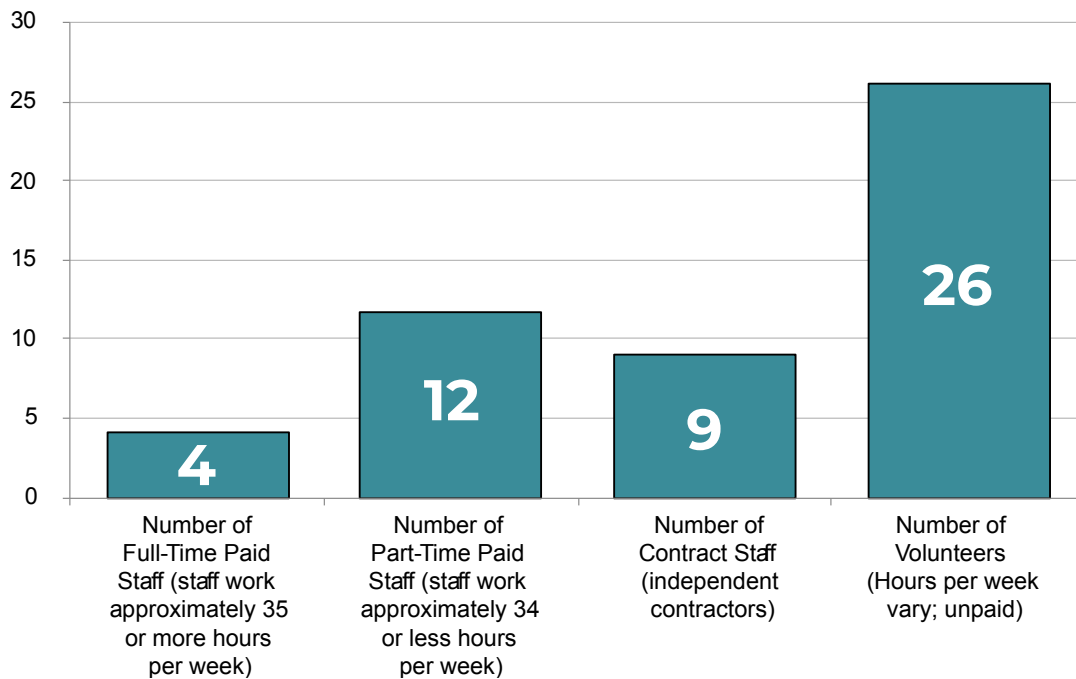
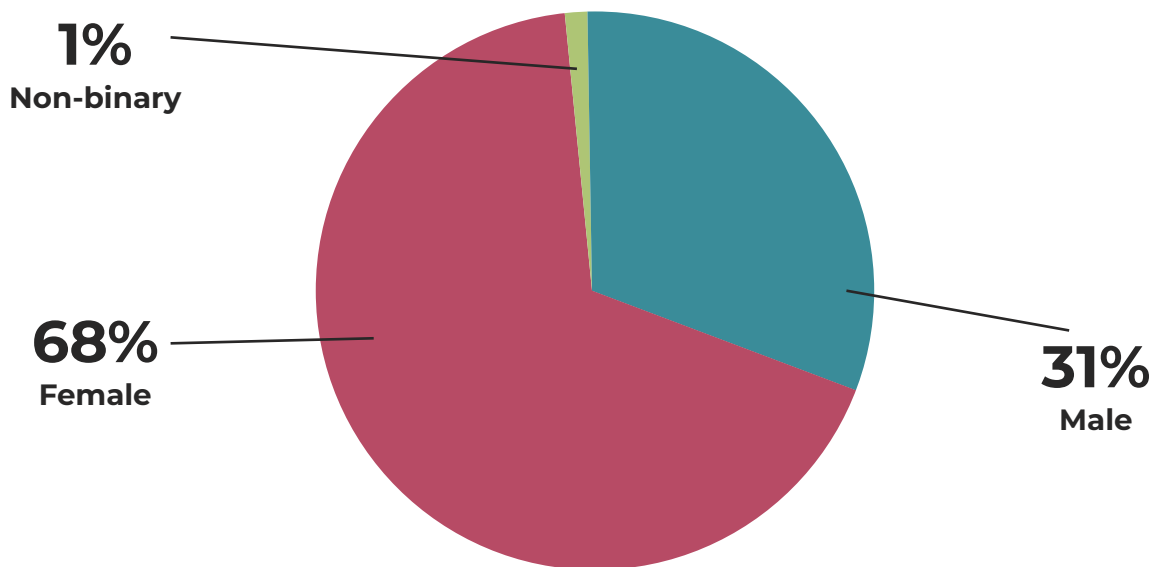


Photo Credit: Play On Philly

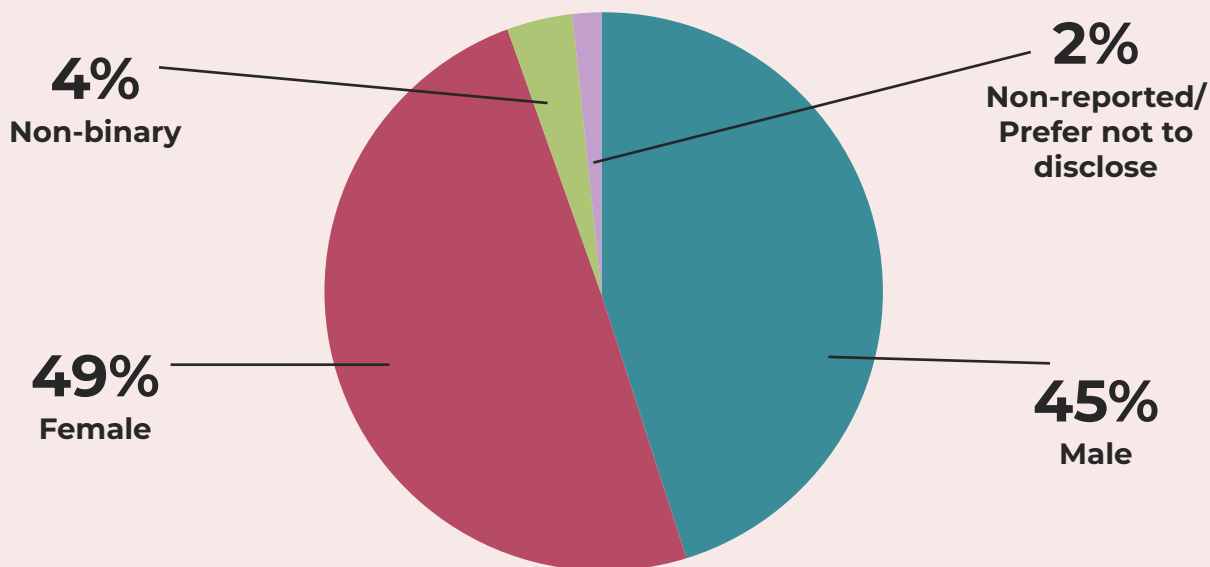
STAFFING DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender of Staff

Administrative Staff (n=73)

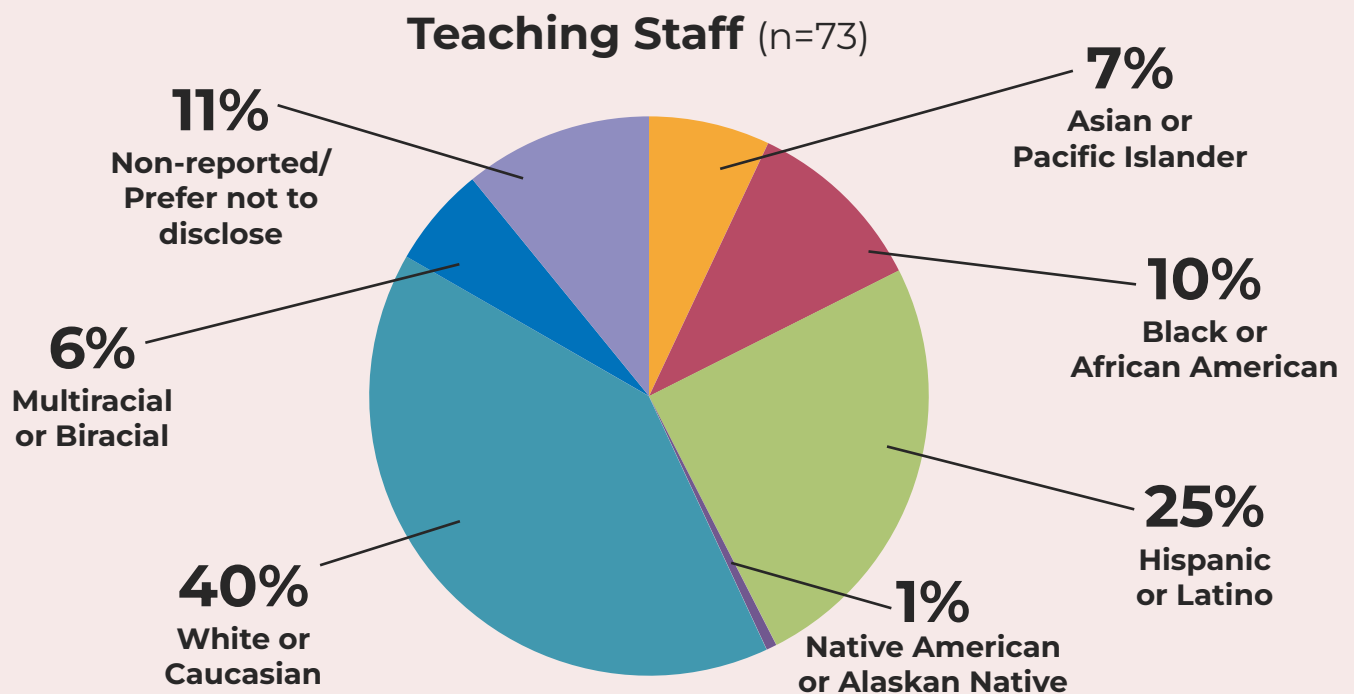
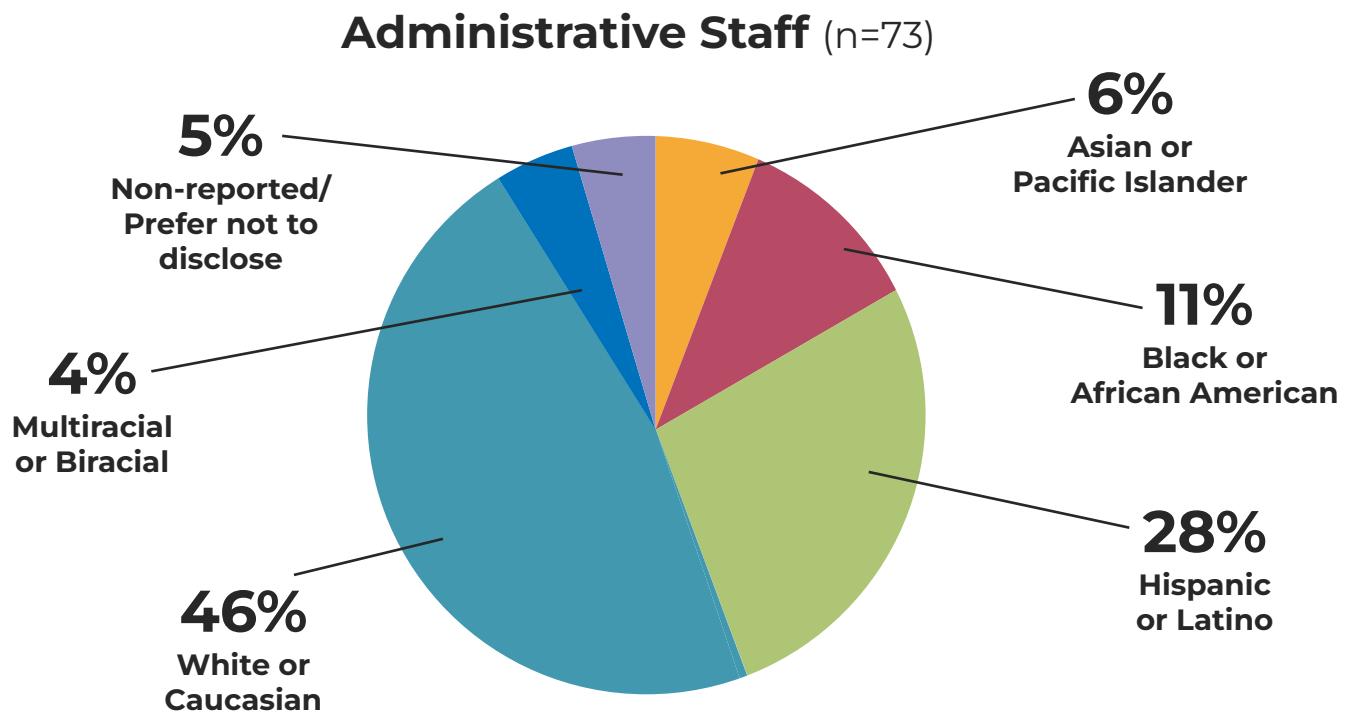


Teaching Staff (n=73)



STAFFING

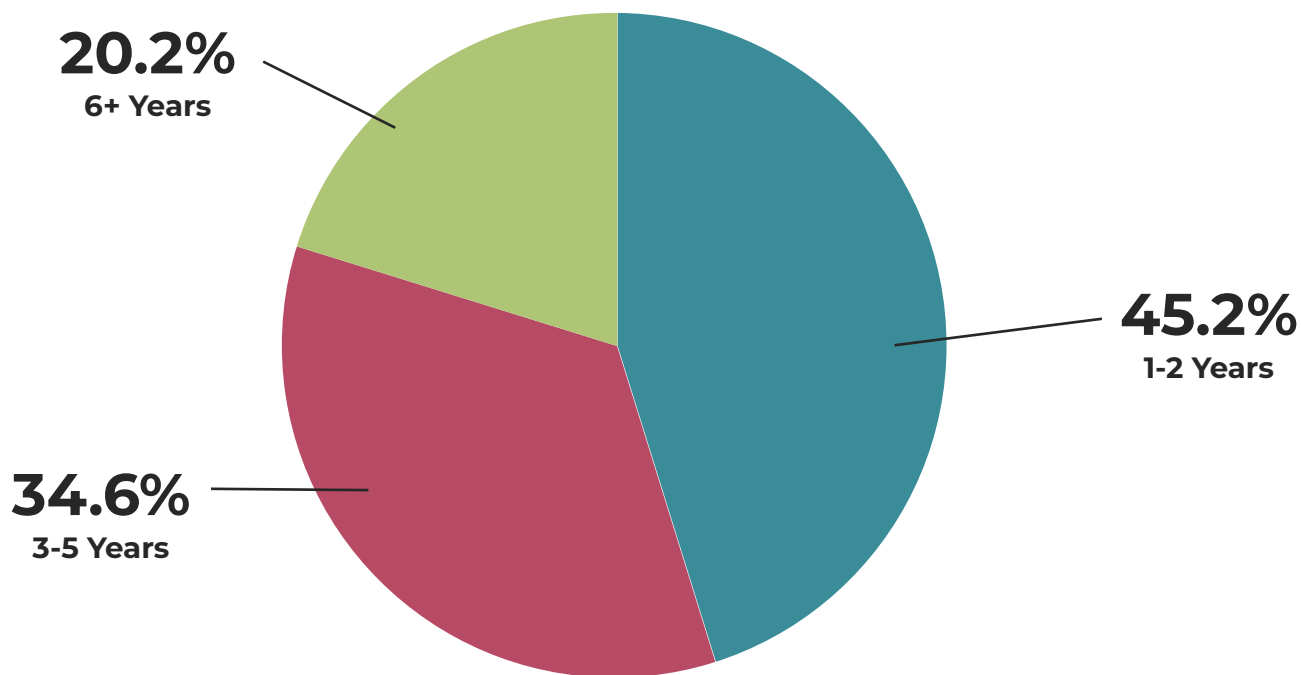
Race and Ethnicity of Staff



STAFFING

Average Teacher Employment Length (n =72)

Almost half of the teaching staff has been employed for 1-2 years.



Full Time In-School Music Teachers

(n=71)

59% of programs of programs did employ full-time, in-school music teachers.

The range for organizations that do have teachers that are full-time, in-school music teachers is **1 teacher** to **16 teachers**. The average is **4 teachers**.



ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGETS

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The total annual budget reported for the **71 organizations** that provided this data is

\$50,343,949

Budget

Average Annual Budget:

\$709,070

The annual budget data ranges from
\$9,696 to \$8,000,000.

(n=71)

The total annual revenues reported for the **63 organizations** that
provided revenue data is

\$38,614,124

Revenue

Average Annual Revenue:

\$612,922

The reported annual revenue ranges from
\$0 to \$3,125,610.

Four of these organizations indicated
that their revenue was \$0.

(n=63)

* Note that the respondents for the revenue and budget questions are different with different number of responses for each question. These two averages do not reflect an average operating deficit.

ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGETS

Cost Per Student

**Average Cost
Per Student:
\$2401.68**

(Total Budget/
Total Students Served)

(n=71)

Average Cost Per Student Per Hour by Organization Size

Size of Org by Number of Students Served	Total Budget	Number of Orgs	Cost Per Student
0-50	\$1.262.901	8	\$4.712,32
51-100	\$3.060.266	13	\$3.404,08
101-150	\$4.405.050	9	\$3.610,70
151-200	\$3.702.362	7	\$3.183,46
201-300	\$7.021.084	12	\$2.306,53
301-400	\$3.282.627	4	\$2.466,29
401-500	\$5.956.153	5	\$2.672,12
501-700	\$6.362.623	7	\$1.586,29
701 +	\$15.290.883	6	\$2.249,65
Totals	\$50.343.949	71	\$2.401,68

ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGETS

Access

(n=73)

Access to Music Education Outside El Sistema Programs, n=73

The pie chart shows respondent's answers to the music education access in the schools they work in. The data shows that El Sistema USA programs work within an uneven landscape of music education. Most ESUSA programs work in schools that do offer some music during the school day, but the reach is inconsistent. Some programs fill a gap in arts access and some serve as a supplement to existing music programming during the school day.

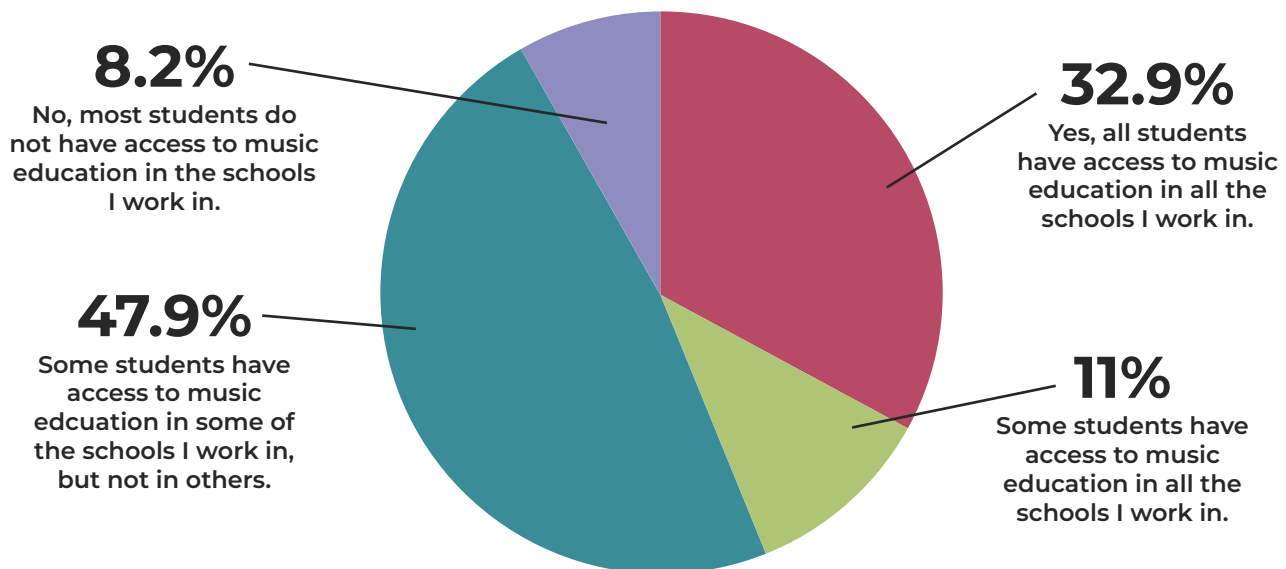


Photo Credit: United Children's Music Project

CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS, STAFF & PARTNERS

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Carmen Delgado, Communications Manager

Angie Scala, Graphic and Web Designer

Jane Vourlekis, Administrative Assistant

RESEARCH PARTNER

Deborah Ward | Ward Consulting

CONTRIBUTING MEMBER PROGRAMS

Thank you to the programs that completed the 2024 Census and contributed to this data:

Accent Pontiac	Valley	Music For All	Academy
A Gift for Music	Enriching Lives through Music	MusicWorks Asheville	Sistema New Brunswick
Angelica Center for Arts and Music	EPIC Music/Catamount Arts	Neighborhood Strings	Sistema Ravinia
Ascension After School Strings (a program of MacPhail)	ESYO CHIME	New Jersey Symphony Youth Orchestra	Sistema Toronto
Austin Soundwaves	Fort Wayne Philharmonic Club Orchestras	Nucleo I, Nucleo II, Aspiring Young Musicians	Sistema Tulsa
Bakerview Music Academy	Fundación Música y Pais	OrKidstra	Sistema Utah
Bay Area Music Project	Greater Milwaukee El Sistema	Paterson Music Project	Sistema Winnipeg
Buffalo String Works	Harmony	People's Music School	The Choir School of Delaware
Butler Community Arts School	Harmony Project Bay Area	Piedmont Learning Academy for Youth (P.L.A.Y. Music)	The Opus Project
Civic Youth Ensembles	Harmony Project KC	Play On Philly	The Raleigh Music Collective
Coda Music Program	Harmony Youth Symphony	Programa Música 100x35: Sistema de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Puerto Rico	Tocando Music Project, A Division of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra
Conservatory Lab Charter School Crescendo Phoenixville	INTEMPO	Project Music, Inc.	Trenton Music Makers
Dallas Symphony Kim Noltemy Young Musicians	JAMM	Quintissimo	Tune Up Philly
ECoSistema	Junior Orchestra of Yamhill County (JOY)	Renaissance Institute of Music	Tuned in
El sistema Congo	Kalamazoo Kids In Tune	Riverside Arts Academy	U.B. Kinsey/Palmview Elementary School of the Arts, "Crescendo"
El Sistema Calgary Multicultural Orchestra Foundation	Kids 4 Harmony	Sound Scholars	Upbeat!
El Sistema Colorado	Kids in Concert	Soundscape	Upbeat New Hampshire
El Sistema Huronia Music Academy	Kids' Orchestra	Simply Strings	YOLA - Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles
El Sistema Lehigh Valley	Kidznotes, Inc.	Sphinx Overture	YONA-Sistema
El Sistema Oklahoma	Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer	Sympatico	
El Sistema Santa Cruz/Pajaro	Miami Music Project	Sistema Huronia Music	
	Music for Everyone		
	Music Mission San Francisco		