



El Sistema USA®

MEMBERSHIP GUIDE



Photo Credit: Joe Hamm, Soundscapes

El Sistema USA® Membership 2024 - 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who We Are	3
Criteria for Membership	4
Member Benefits	5
Professional Development	6
Data & Advocacy	7
Student Learning & Learning	8
Resources & Tools	9
Types of Membership	10
Membership Dues	10



Who We Are

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Manager of Creative Youth

Voice and Leadership

MISSION:

El Sistema USA works to ensure every child has access to high-quality music education that celebrates their voice and potential by supporting a national network of organizations & educators.

VISION:

El Sistema USA is committed to equity and excellence in music education. We envision a world in which every child - regardless of income, geography, or identity - has access to a high-quality music education program that builds community, opportunity, and personal growth



Board of Directors

Chair and Executive Committee Chair

Lauren Shelton Beacon Arts, IN

Co-Vice Chair

Isaac Sinnett, Chicago, IL

Sr. Associate Director, Reach*Teach*Play*, Sistema Ravinia

Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair

Robert Gofourth, Durham, NC

Vice President, Operational Strategy & Performance, Blue Cross Blue Shield NC

Clerk

Mateen Milan, Baltimore, MD

Comprehensive Arts Education Coordinator, Maryland State Department of Education

Membership & Engagement Committee Chair

Karen Cueva, Washington D.C.

Head of Operations, The Lewis Prize for Music

Co-Governance Committee Chair

Kaitlyn Korogy, San Diego, CA

Program Manager, The Opus Project at the San Diego Youth Symphony

Advancement Committee Chair

Carol Minter, Newport News, VA

Executive Director, Soundscapes

Roger Bernstein, New York, NY

RJB Law

Linda Bunce, Alexandria, VA

Nonprofit Executive

Mark Churchill, Boston, MA

Founder, El Sistema USA; Dean Emeritus, Preparatory-Continuing Education, New England Conservatory

Liber Cuervos, Miami, FL

Director of Education and Programs, Miami Music Project

Camille Delaney-McNeill, Los Angeles, CA

Director, YOLA Beckman Center

Vivian Gonzalez, Miami, FL

Director, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer/MDCPS

Rodrigo Guerrero, Boston, MA

Staff Specialist for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Babson College

Dr. Thomas Howard, Durham, NC

Executive Director, Kidznotes

Douglas Laustsen, Stamford, CT

Director of Operations, INTEMPO

Tomisha Price-Brock, Las Vegas, NV

President, HBCU National Band and Orchestra Directors' Consortium

Isabelle Tuncer, Pajaro Valley, CA

Executive Director, El Sistema Santa Cruz/Pajaro Valley

Ciyadh Wells, Boston, MA

Executive Director, Caste of our Skins

Brian Wiebe, Elkhart, IN

President/CEO, Horizon Education Alliance

Criteria for Membership

Social Change

- Central to the mission of the program is a demonstrated commitment to music as a vehicle for social impact.
- Program has key individual or institutional partners that provide expertise in both music and community/youth/social development.

Intensity

- In order to provide all children with intensive opportunities to practice and excel, students have access to at least 5 hours of musical instruction per week.

Access

- Primarily serve children with financial access barriers to other high-quality music programs.
- Provide programs in a manner that ensures equal access to all children regardless of ability to pay.

Ensemble

- Emphasize ensemble programming as a core element of curriculum.

Nucleo Environment

- Students gather in a central location that serves as the program's home and is a safe haven and emblem of music as a social impact agent in the community.
- Programs demonstrate unifying practices that encourage students and teachers to know and support each other and develop a unique culture characterized by: student driven activities, and instructor mentorship where students feel loved and valued as a member of the nucleo community.

Excellence

- Programs are of high quality; defined in part by regular musical instruction and established practices for measurable outcomes in both musical growth and positive social impact.
- Central to the curriculum are practices which foster musical excellence at all stages of development.

Community

- Proven parental involvement and community engagement practices.

Continuum

- Programs serve children for a minimum of 3 years and aspire to serve them beyond childhood and into young adulthood.



Member Benefits

Professional Development

Regional Gatherings 2025

Supported by a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant, El Sistema USA (ESUSA) is pleased to announce the 2025 Regional Gatherings. These two regional events on the east and west coast will bring together music educators, administrators, and students for two days of professional development, networking, and community engagement. The East Coast first Regional Gathering event will be held at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, Maryland June 20-21, 2025.

El Sistema USA Virtual Forums

In addition to our in-person gatherings, El Sistema USA hosts online virtual gatherings monthly from October to June for CEOs, Program Directors, and Teaching Artists. Led by facilitators in the field, these are opportunities for leaders, administrators, and teaching artists to gather online to share resources, hear from external speakers, resource share, and network. [Register for the Virtual Forums Here.](#)

In 2024-2025, those groups are:

- **Teaching Artists Forum** | Facilitated by Anna Barson in partnership with [the Teaching Artists Training Institute](#)

The Teaching Artist Forum aims to provide a space for Teaching Artists working with El Sistema-inspired programs to collaborate, network, and workshop teaching ideas and strategies. Through six discussion-based forums facilitated in partnership with the Teaching Artists Training Institute (TATI), participants will explore best practices in music education by looking at case studies from peer Teaching Artists, address common classroom success and challenges, and idea swap tools for implementing new teaching techniques.

- **CEO Forum** | Facilitated by Gabrielle Molina

CEO Forums offer an exclusive platform for Executive Directors and senior leaders to network and engage in focused discussions on establishing and managing Sistema-inspired programs in the United States and Canada. Designed with small to midsize entities in mind, these forums facilitate interactive dialogue for problem-solving and knowledge sharing. Participants, including program directors aspiring to leadership roles, are encouraged to share their experiences in collaborative formats, fostering collective learning and informed decision-making within our field.

- **Program Directors and Managers Forum** | Facilitated by Paloma Udovic Ramos

The Program Director & Manager Forum is an action-oriented, working group focused on sharing best programmatic tactics, strategies, and practices within the field. These sessions are aimed at Program Directors, Program Managers, Site Directors, but may be useful and applicable to other program decision makers and Teaching Artists.

As Program Directors & Managers, your position within an organization is unique in that you interface with many stakeholders within the program, whether that be students, families, teaching artists, and executive staff. Some of you may also deal with community partners, donors, and boards.

These sessions are intended to create a network of Program Directors and share out best practices collectively. Sessions will be a hybrid of some panel discussions and group discussions.

In addition to meeting bi-monthly, the resources generated from these groups will be available online for all members.

Partnership Opportunities

Through partnerships with organizations and institutions, we offer a variety of special opportunities for members. These have included the following:

- The **Eastman Institute for Music Leadership** is proud to collaborate with El Sistema USA to offer up to five full-scholarship seats to El Sistema USA® leaders to the [Eastman Leadership Bootcamp](#).

Student Leadership & Learning

Youth Ambassador Program

Each year El Sistema USA® selects 10+ high school youth ambassadors to prepare and present content at the National Symposium. Learn more about last year's 2024 Youth Ambassador Cohort [here](#). Stay tuned for more information and applications for the 2025 cohort. The Youth Ambassador Program is led by Daniel Trahey; Founder of Tuned-In at the Peabody Institute.

Collegiate Access Webinar Series

El Sistema USA and [Equity Arc](#) are excited to unveil a joint venture to provide support and expert guidance to musicians on the cusp of collegiate study and their families. The "[College Access for Young Musicians](#)" series is open to students, parents/guardians, teachers, and program leaders. [Register for the Collegiate Access Webinar Series Here](#).

Scholarships Opportunities

Through partnerships with organizations and institutions, we offer a variety of scholarships and special opportunities for members. These have included the following:

- [Full-tuition scholarships to the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University](#) designated for students in El Sistema USA Member Organizations

Data & Advocacy

ESUSA Social Emotional Survey Tool

ESUSA is launching a new data initiative for the 2024-25 school year free of charge to members. ESUSA will provide a standardized student survey tool for programs to use which can be matched to measure change over time. We are developing an online portal with DART Analytics which will allow programs to upload their survey data and to view the results of their individual program. The database will also include program demographic data. The power of this system is in the collective impact of widespread standardized data collection. [Learn More.](#)

ESUSA Studies & Reports

ESUSA [Summary of Field Data 2024](#) | ESUSA has commissioned a compilation and systematic review of the extensive literature and research on the impact of music education on children.

ESUSA [Data Resource Library](#) | El Sistema USA® has commissioned a compilation and systematic review of the extensive literature and research on the impact of music education on children. ESUSA has selected thirty studies and papers that relate most closely to our work for members to view on the resource hub.

ESUSA [Census](#) | ESUSA implements a Bi-Annual Census which provides benchmarking data for the field. Current and past [Census Reports](#) can be found on the ESUSA Website.

ESUSA [Salary Report](#) | The latest 2022 Salary Report can be found on our [Annual Reports](#) page.

ESUSA [2024 New Year Report](#) | View ESUSA's 2023-24 activities in the [New Year Report](#).



Awareness Building

Our presence on social media reaches over **11,000 followers** and our newsletter and nearly **5,000 subscribers**. Through our monthly newsletter and social media marketing, we work to advance the brand of El Sistema nationally and highlight the work of our member organizations around the country.

Resources & Tools

Online Resources

Our [Resource Hub](#) has **hundreds of free resources for Member organizations**. This includes program template documents, funding strategy documents, curriculum resources, repertoire for ensembles, and so much more. Our Video Library contains recordings and materials from all past webinars. The ESUSA website also has an active [jobs board](#), which all members can post on free of charge. Non-members must pay a fee to post job openings.

Partnership Opportunities

Through partnerships with organizations and institutions, we offer a variety of scholarships and special opportunities for members. These have included the following:

- A partnership with **Conn Selmer** resulting in a [Special Pricing Program](#) that allows members to:
 - Purchase instruments at 75% reduction
 - Free access to Allegro by Cut Time
 - Free access to MusicProfessor.Com
 - [Learn More](#)
- A partnership with [Noteflight Learn site](#) that allows El Sistema USA members free access to create and share music in a private online community. [Learn More](#)

Types of Membership

[Join the movement](#) of 140+ member programs, 25,000 enrolled youth, representing more than 6,000 teaching artists, across 35 US states and territories!

1. Organizational Membership Options

Membership with El Sistema USA is an organizational membership that allows organizations to create an unlimited number of accounts for all staff, teaching artists, board members, volunteers, etc.

- **Organizational Member:** For established El Sistema-inspired organizations that meet the [membership criteria](#) (below).
- **Member in Training:** For El Sistema-inspired organizations in the first year of existence that meet or are working toward meeting the [membership criteria](#).
- **Affiliate Member:** For organizations that align with the ESUSA [core values and vision](#), but may not meet all of the membership criteria OR are not U.S/Canada based.

2. Individual Membership

El Sistema USA also offers an individual membership for those not associated with an organization that's already a member. Individual members receive the same benefits as our organization members.

Membership Dues

Membership Dues are due yearly at the anniversary of their inception date. All Members are welcome to enroll in payment plans to assist with payment. In addition, a limited number of fee-reductions are available on an application basis. Interested organizations should contact Elizabeth Moulthrop at elizabeth@elsistemausa.org.

Organizational & Affiliate Member Dues	
Organizational Budget	Membership Dues
Less than \$200,000 / year	\$350 / year
More than \$200,000 / year	\$500 / year
Member In Training Dues: \$250 / year Individual Dues: \$100 / year	



Member Level		Organizational	Member in Training	Affiliate	Individual
Annual Dues		\$350 - Orgs w/ budgets < \$200K \$500 - Orgs w/ budgets > \$200K	\$250 for 1 year	\$350 - Orgs w/ budgets < \$200K \$500 - Orgs w/ budgets > \$200K	\$100
Eligibility		Alignment with the Guiding Principles	Alignment with the Guiding Principles	Alignment with the vision and core values of El Sistema USA	Alignment with the core values of El Sistema USA
Professional Development Benefits	Free Access to Webinars	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Free Access to Resources in Online Store	✓	✓	✓	✓
	National Symposium and Seminar	✓* (Discounted rate, Invited to propose sessions)	✓* (Discounted rate)	✓* (Discounted rate)	✓* (Discounted rate)
	"Intro to El Sistema USA" Series	✓	✓		
Mentorship Benefits	New Organization Mentor Role	✓			
	New Organization Mentee Role		✓		
Peer Networking Benefits	Access to Regional Groups	✓	✓	✓	
	Access to Virtual Peer Working Groups	✓	✓	✓	
	Access to Chief Executives Forum	✓	✓	✓	
	Listed in the Directory	✓	✓* (As New Member)	(As Affiliate)	
	Access to the Directory	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information & Resources Benefits	Census Data Input	✓			
	Can View Census Data	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Resource Library (past webinars)	✓	✓	✓	
	Listing on Job Bank	✓	✓	✓	✓* (Discounted rate)
	Access to Listings on Job Bank	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Virtual Publications	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Instrument, Software and Accessory Discounts	✓	✓	✓ - as able	
Musical Activities Benefits	Eligible to participate in ESUSA Seminarios	✓	✓	as available, priority given to full member organizations	
	Eligible to participate in ESUSA Collaborative Projects (i.e."Hear Our Song" and "Somewhere Across America")	✓	✓	as available, priority given to full member organizations	
Governance Benefits	Participation on Board Committee	✓	✓		✓
	Nominations to the Board of Directors of ESUSA	✓	✓		
	Voting in the ESUSA Board of Directors Election	✓	✓		



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