



Fostering Belonging at the SLSO EDI Framework

The SLSO Today

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's story is woven into America's artistic and cultural fabric. For more than 140 years, the SLSO has played the musical soundtrack for milestones in the St. Louis region's history and evolution. It has been a constant source of joy, inspiration, celebration, reflection, comfort, and healing for its audiences. Like the community it serves, the SLSO is continually evolving, finding new ways to connect, engage, create, teach, learn, entertain, and shape the orchestral art form in new ways, so that all are welcome to experience the uniquely transformative power of music.

EDI Vision

The SLSO envisions a world in which every life is enriched through the power of music. This world is created when cultural arts institutions acknowledge their specialties and actively seek opportunities to embrace diverse communities, musical traditions, and artistic styles. For the SLSO, these opportunities result in meaningful performances that explore and share a wide range of human creativity and experience. The SLSO's unique combination of deep musical roots and broad reach in the global art field provides a foundation for the vital EDI work that is the pathway for unleashing the power of music. To move beyond exclusive practices that perpetuate cultural divisions and structural inequities, the SLSO works toward a collaborative and equitable world. The SLSO commits to the significant EDI efforts of dismantling barriers to the human expression, engagement, and enjoyment of music.

Framework Development Process

Maintaining a culture that promotes a sense of equity, diversity, and inclusion requires **recognizing the value of each member of our SLSO community**. In developing this EDI framework, we led a series of listening sessions across stakeholder groups to assess the SLSO's EDI objectives.

Building on decades of work, SLSO has demonstrated its commitment to EDI by creating the position of Manager of Inclusion & Adult Learning to bridge program gaps identified in our framework development process.

We Pledge to:

- Promote diversity within our board, orchestra, chorus, volunteers, and staff;
- Promote greater understanding of, and respect for, diversity in our audience; and
- Advance our work in the area of diversity and inclusion, including audience, orchestra and staff personnel, repertoire, young artists, boards and governance practice.

EDI Guiding Principles

The SLSO is committed to institutionalizing EDI within its programs and operations. As part of this work, it has developed a set of guiding principles to inform how it approaches the task of institutional transformation.



- Invite Engagement
- Listen Radically
- Invest in the Long-Term
- Exercise Transparency
- Maintain Accountability



EDI Priorities

EDI efforts are focused on building champions and creating a sense of belonging.

People

Goal 1: Develop a sense of belonging that fosters diverse talent among the SLSO family (board, staff, musicians, choruses, volunteers).

Programming

Goal 2: Promote inclusion, access to music, and the development of diverse talent from sequential educational music experiences Pre-K- 12.

Partnerships

Goal 3: Advance musical experiences that showcase the scope and variety of orchestral programming and artists that create greater access and demand from broader audiences.

Goal 4: Align community engagement, partnership, and relationship building efforts to create access to music and a sense of belonging at the SLSO.

Action Plan to include:

- **One Language:** Provide internal stakeholders with ongoing EDI training, skill-building, and development support.
- **Baselines:** Conduct a comprehensive EDI audit covering all departments' policies, practices, and communications.
- **Experience:** Program with storytelling and human experience as artistic inspiration.
- **Engagement:** Advance partnerships through philanthropy and audience development programs to support enduring artistic excellence and institutional sustainability.



St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director