



FY25 Impact Report



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Letter from Equity Arc

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, one word rises to the surface: **resilience**.

This season tested and affirmed Equity Arc's capacity to endure, adapt, and remain deeply responsive to the musicians and families we serve. Across the country, our community showed remarkable steadiness amid uncertainty. Our programming continued to evolve with care and intention, partnerships grew stronger, and our work remained visible and relevant during a period that demanded clarity of purpose. The work reflected in this report captures an organization strengthening its core while sustaining impact through a broad and committed network.

We carried this work forward in a shifting operating environment shaped by legal, policy, and institutional changes that have been unfolding for several years. As these dynamics became more immediate across the field, they underscored the importance of organizational resilience and of being grounded in mission while flexible in approach. For Equity Arc, these conditions sharpened our understanding of where our presence and leadership were most needed.

Guided by years of listening, collaboration, and strategic reflection, we continued to refine how we use our resources and energy. This year marked a significant structural transition as we concluded our formal membership model and focused more directly on serving musicians and families. At the same time, we remained actively engaged with educators, institutions, and partners who help sustain pathways nationwide.

Throughout the year, Equity Arc balanced responsiveness with continuity. We introduced new forms of support, convened our largest gathering to date, and upheld artistically rigorous programming even as conditions continued to shift. Above all, we are proud of the resilience of our community and of our shared commitment to moving forward with integrity and purpose.

As we look ahead, Equity Arc stands grounded by what this year has affirmed: resilience is built through relationships, focus, and collective care. We enter the next chapter committed to sustaining musicians, families, and partners while we work to strengthen the systems that allow artistry, dignity, and belonging to endure.

With appreciation,



Stanford Thompson, Executive Director
Equity Arc

FY25 by the Numbers

833

Program
Applications

727

Individuals reached
through Programmatic
Initiatives

563

Virtual Event
Attendees

157

National
Convening
Attendees

26

Common
Application
Partners

20

National Collective
for Musical Pathways
Members

11

Major Media
Features

\$150k

in Instrument
Funds Awarded

\$440k

in Summer Study
Scholarships Earned

80

Ensemble
Fellows

67

Core Musical
Mentors



FY25 Investment & Growth

Building Capacity for Impact

Equity Arc's continued growth has required intentional investment in the people, systems, and infrastructure that make ambitious national programming possible. During FY25, staff growth reflected a strategic commitment to strengthening direct program delivery, operational rigor, communications capacity, and fundraising infrastructure.

As Equity Arc's work has expanded in scale and visibility, so too has the importance of telling our story clearly and consistently. Building the capacity to communicate impact, share outcomes, and elevate the voices of musicians has become central to strengthening and diversifying our funding model. These investments position Equity Arc to sustain our work responsibly while remaining responsive to a changing environment.

Through our relationship with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Equity Arc has continued to professionalize our financial and human resources practices. Our team works closely with CSO partners to refine procedures and systems commensurate with a maturing nonprofit organization. This collaboration has supported greater clarity, accountability, and long-term independence as Equity Arc prepares for our next phase of organizational development.

Strategic Focus in a Dynamic Environment

Since launching during the pandemic, Equity Arc has remained attentive to the need for reflection, adaptation, and learning. In FY25, this work took the form of deeper analysis and synthesis across program data, convening outcomes, and sustained conversations with partners across the field.

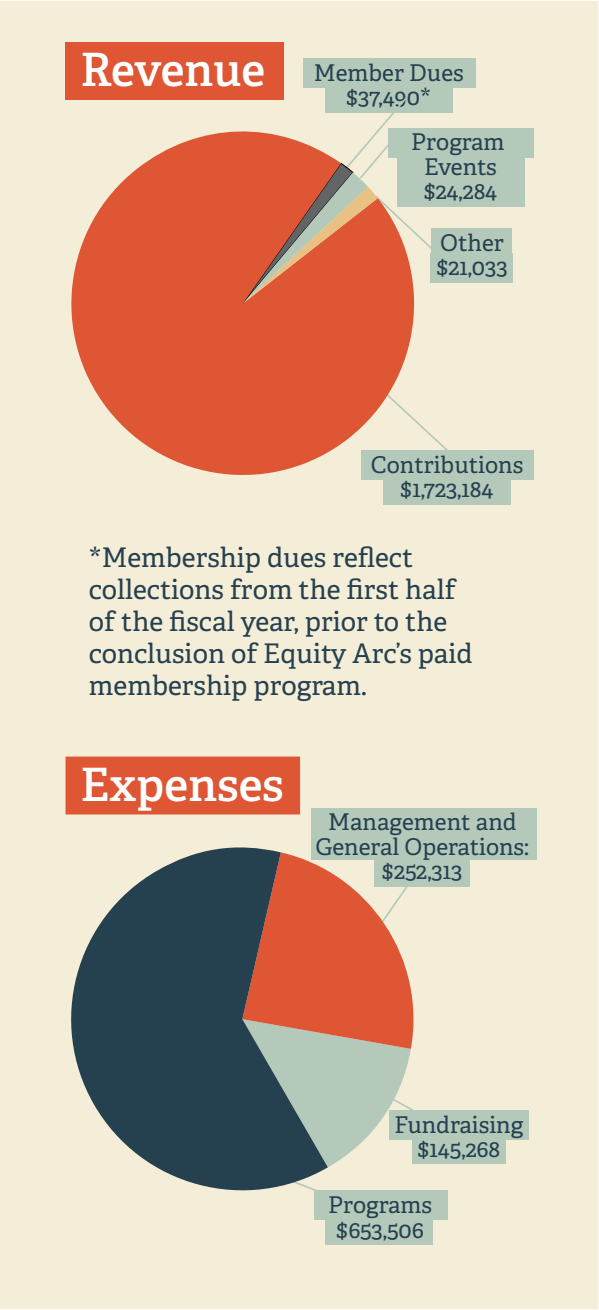
Rather than initiating formal strategic planning during a period of heightened uncertainty, Equity Arc used FY25 to strengthen the foundation for that work. The evolving operating environment sharpened both the urgency and the intentionality of this preparation, allowing us to remain bold in purpose while staying closely attuned to the realities facing institutions, educators, and musicians nationwide. As a result, Equity Arc enters FY26 positioned to engage in strategic planning from a place of clarity and readiness.

Organizational Evolution and Network Engagement

FY25 also marked a period of reflection and decision-making around Equity Arc's formal membership model. The national membership played a critical role in our early growth, enabling national coordination and shared learning across institutions. Over time, however, it became clear that the field Equity Arc serves is broader than any formal membership structure.

In response to these realities, and after thoughtful consideration, Equity Arc formally concluded our paid membership model in FY25. This decision allows Equity Arc to remove financial barriers to collaboration, direct more resources toward musicians and families, and

engage partners with greater flexibility. This evolution reflects a continued commitment to national collaboration, ecosystem-building, and equity-driven change. Equity Arc remains deeply engaged with educators, institutions, and partners, particularly as many navigate uncertainty around equity-focused programming and institutional capacity.



Strengthening and Diversifying Revenue

FY25 marked meaningful progress toward a more sustainable and balanced funding model. The continued support of the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation empowered significant organizational and programmatic advances, including Equity Arc's first successful multi-year grant from a national funder.

At the same time, Equity Arc strengthened relationships with institutional funders such as the Music Man Foundation, Country Music Association Foundation, Volgenau Foundation, and Driehaus Foundation. Together, these partnerships reflect an ongoing commitment to building a funding base that supports both national initiatives and locally grounded work.

During the first half of the year, member dues continued to support Equity Arc's mission. As conversations around the future of the membership model and the external landscape evolved, we paused the collection of dues in alignment with our evolving strategy.

FY25 also marked meaningful growth in Equity Arc's individual giving program, supported by increased national visibility. A feature on Equity Arc's Wind Symphony aired on 60 Minutes, connecting a broad

audience to our work and helping introduce Equity Arc to new supporters. The broadcast led to contributions from more than 600 individual donors, strengthening an important pillar of its long-term funding model.

Investing in Programmatic Growth

Equity Arc continued to prioritize investment in transformational, tuition-free programming that meets musicians at pivotal moments in their development. The Equity Arc Pathways Orchestra remained a cornerstone of this work, offering intensive orchestral training, mentorship, and community for students preparing to take their next steps. In FY25, this commitment deepened through the launch of the Equity Arc Wind Symphony, expanding access to in-person training for musicians whose primary pathways and professional futures are rooted in wind and brass traditions.

These ensembles reflect Equity Arc's belief that excellence is cultivated through sustained engagement, high expectations, and care for the whole musician. In-person residencies created space for focused artistic work alongside conversations about navigating institutions, preparing for auditions, and imagining futures in music that feel both ambitious and attainable. These experiences were shaped not only by repertoire and rehearsal, but by the relationships formed among Fellows, mentors, and convening attendees.

Within the structure of our in-person ensembles, Equity Arc intentionally integrated a range of learning experiences designed to support musicians' growth beyond the rehearsal room. Curated visits to institutions of higher education, mock auditions, and opportunities to engage directly with professionals were woven into residency schedules, reinforcing learning through context, exposure, and practice. Together, these elements helped demystify next steps and grounded artistic work in real-world pathways.



Investment in programmatic growth also included embedded leadership development opportunities tied directly to Equity Arc's ensemble and convening work. In FY25, Fellows participated in a paid internship program connected to the orchestral residency and convening, working alongside staff on communications, community engagement, and program-related projects. These experiences offered hands-on exposure to the organizational side of the field while allowing participants to contribute meaningfully to the work they were already part of.

Across programs, Equity Arc's focus remained consistent. Provide access to rigorous training. Reduce barriers to participation. Create environments where musicians can take artistic risks, build confidence, and carry what they learn forward into their studies and careers.

Equity Arc's convening work in FY25 brought together stakeholders from across the country for timely, collaborative conversations grounded in shared values and musical excellence. Musicians, educators, institutional leaders, families, and partners gathered to exchange perspectives, reflect on current challenges, and learn from one another as the field continues to navigate change.

Held concurrently with the Pathways Orchestra, the convening reflected Equity Arc's commitment to keeping musicians at the center of field-wide dialogue. Rehearsals, performances, and open conversations took place in close proximity, reinforcing the connection between artistic practice and the broader systems that shape opportunity. This structure created space for participants to engage with one another while also witnessing the discipline and artistry of the young musicians at the heart of the work.



By aligning the convening with the Pathways Orchestra residency, Equity Arc created a national platform that elevated musicians' visibility and situated their talent within a broader professional and institutional context. This approach underscored a core belief of Equity Arc's work: meaningful progress is built through shared learning, sustained collaboration, and a clear commitment to excellence.



Reducing Barriers to Access

In FY25, Equity Arc deepened our commitment to expanding access to the often-unspoken knowledge that shapes opportunity in classical music training. Through the launch of Collegiate Access for Young Musicians, developed in collaboration with El Sistema USA, Equity Arc presented a webinar series focused on demystifying the college application process for aspiring musicians.

While musical preparation is crucial, this initiative intentionally centered the non-musical components of music school applications, including academic requirements, written materials, financial considerations, and navigating institutional expectations. By creating structured, accessible spaces to address these topics, Equity Arc helped make visible the information that too often circulates informally or unevenly. This work reflects a growing recognition that access to opportunity depends not only on talent, but on clear guidance, transparency, and timely support.

Equity Arc remains committed to ensuring that financial barriers never limit a musician's access to opportunity. In FY25, 833 applications were submitted through Equity Arc initiatives via Accepted, an increase of 37% from the prior year. By absorbing application fees, Equity Arc continues to invest directly in access, signaling that talent and potential should never be constrained by cost.

Advancing Learning Through Data and Shared Knowledge

Equity Arc remains committed to building clear, credible impact data that strengthens understanding of pathways-based training and supports informed decision-making across the field. In FY25, this work continued through the Pathways Census, Equity Arc's national effort to collect and synthesize aggregate data on programs, practices, and outcomes across the National Collective for Musical Pathways.

By bringing together information from across institutions, the Census helps illuminate the scale, rigor, and consistency of pathways-based training nationwide. The resulting data offers a clearer picture of how young musicians are prepared for advanced study, including the intensity of their musical training, academic engagement, and progression through structured programs. The Census provides institutions, funders, and partners with a shared evidence base that supports recruitment, investment, and long-term planning.

Importantly, this aggregate view allows Equity Arc to move beyond anecdote. The data gathered through the Census demonstrates the depth of preparation and merit of pathways musicians, reinforcing the case for continued investment in recruiting, supporting, and advancing these artists within higher education and professional spaces.

This year, Equity Arc expanded our commitment to shared learning through the development of a pedagogical tool rooted in the collective knowledge and experience of Pathways partners. Designed to provide broader access to the Pathways approach to repertoire development, this initiative reflects Equity Arc's role not only as a program provider, but as a knowledge-sharing organization committed to strengthening the field as a whole.

These investments in organizational capacity and financial sustainability allowed Equity Arc's programmatic work to grow with intention in FY25. The sections that follow illustrate how this foundation supported meaningful experiences for musicians and partners, and how Equity Arc's commitments took shape through programs in practice.

FY25 Impact & Initiatives

Common Application for Summer Study Season 4

Equity Arc's Common Application for Summer Study provides a free, streamlined pathway to top summer study programs across the country. Designed to expand access to transformative summer learning experiences, the Common Application supports musicians from backgrounds historically underrepresented in classical music in accessing programs that fuel artistic growth, build professional networks, and open doors to new opportunities. By sharing resources and best practices across our partner programs, we collectively advance equity in classical music and ensure that talented musicians of color can pursue high-quality summer study.

In its fourth season, the Common Application boasted 26 program partners, including seven new additions: The Chamber Music Intensive at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Heifetz International Music Institute, Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival, Meadowmount School of Music, Ravinia Steans Music Institute, Sphinx Performance Academy, and Summer@SFCM Harp Immersive. As our partner network continues to grow, so does the impact of the Common Application. This season, 207 unique applicants submitted 676 applications to partner programs, 118 musicians enrolled in summer study programs, and partner organizations awarded more than \$440,000 in scholarships* to musicians who met the artistic expectations for admission. Equity Arc is deeply grateful for the collaboration and generosity of our Common Application partners, whose support helps make transformative musical experiences accessible to deserving young musicians.

**This number is inclusive of the estimated cost of tuition-free programs.*



"The Common Application has impacted my musical development by introducing me to a whole new side of the music world, and pushing me to step out of my comfort zone. It gave me access to camps all over the country that I'd never heard of, so I'm definitely excited to see how I've grown in my next summer application."

—Equity Arc Fellow

"We've been so happy to be a part of the common application. We've worked with many Equity Arc students over the years. It has widened our applicant pool and increased the diversity of our students."

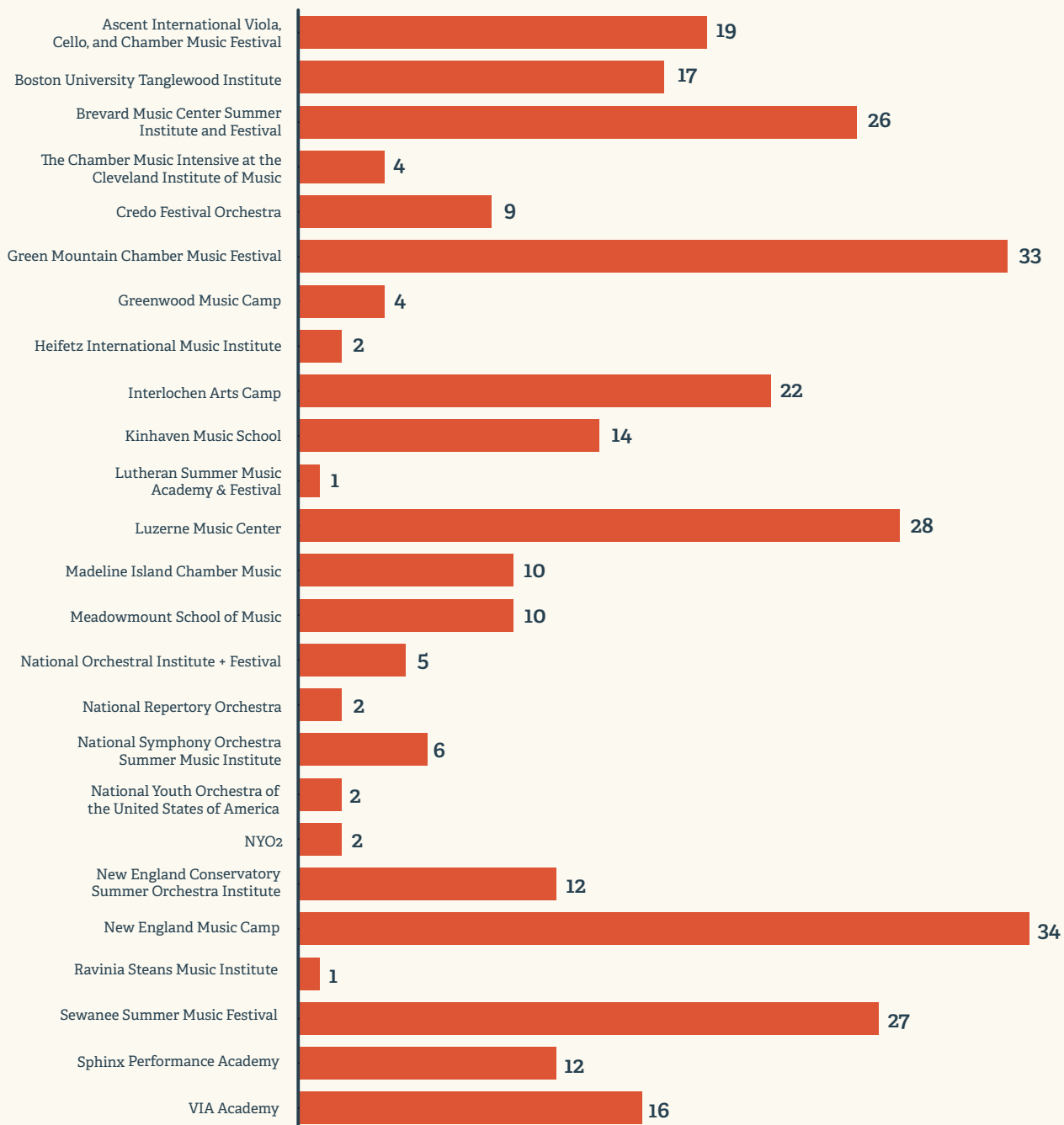
—VP of Operations, Luzerne Music Center



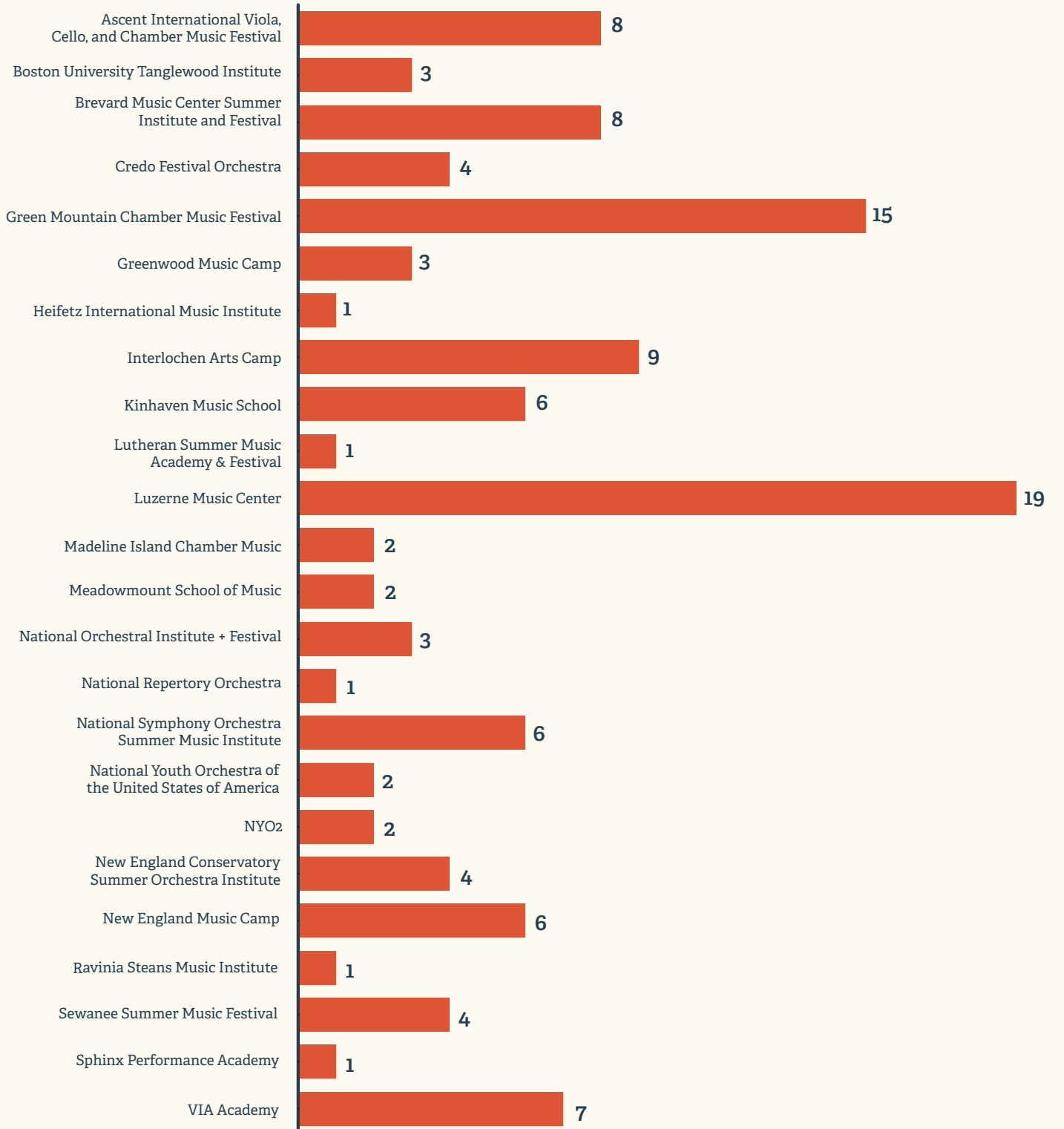
“The Equity Arc Common Application for Summer Study has had a significant impact on my musical development by making high-level summer programs more accessible and achievable. Through the platform, I was able to apply to multiple festivals with greater ease, which broadened my opportunities to study with exceptional faculty, collaborate with talented peers, and immerse myself in intensive musical environments. Equity Arc's commitment to removing barriers has made a meaningful difference in my journey.”

—Equity Arc Fellow

Applicants Accepted by Program



Applicants Enrolled by Program



2025 COMMON APPLICATION PARTNERS

- Ascent International Viola, Cello, and Chamber Music Festival (Hudson, OH)
- Boston University Tanglewood Institute (Lenox, MA)
- Brevard Music Center Summer Institute and Festival (Brevard, NC)
- The Chamber Music Intensive at the Cleveland Institute of Music (Cleveland, OH)
- Credo Festival Orchestra (Chicago, IL)
- Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival (Colchester, VT)
- Greenwood Music Camp (Cummington, MA)
- Heifetz International Music Institute (Staunton, VA)
- Interlochen Arts Camp (Interlochen, MI)
- Kinhaven Music School (Weston, VT)
- Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival (Minneapolis, MN)
- Luzerne Music Center (Lake Luzerne, NY)
- Madeline Island Chamber Music (La Pointe, WI)
- Meadowmount School of Music (Westport, NY)
- National Orchestral Institute + Festival (College Park, MD)
- National Repertory Orchestra (Breckenridge, CO)
- National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute (Washington, DC)
- National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America (Purchase, NY + Tour)
- NYO2 (Purchase, NY + Tour)
- New England Conservatory Summer Orchestra Institute (Boston, MA)
- New England Music Camp (Sidney, ME)
- Ravinia Steans Music Institute (Highland Park, IL)
- Sewanee Summer Music Festival (Sewanee, TN)
- Sphinx Performance Academy (Boulder, CO; Boston, MA; New York, NY)
- Summer@SFCM Harp Immersive (San Francisco, CA)
- VIA Academy (Virtual + Miami Beach, FL)

Equity Arc National Convening

On April 4-6, 2025, Equity Arc hosted our National Convening in Chicago, IL. This event convened over 150 administrators, musicians, and parents in the pre-college, collegiate, and summer study space to have strategic conversations on equity in classical music.

The Equity Arc Pathways Orchestra brings together pre-college musicians from historically underrepresented cultural backgrounds in classical music who study at Pathways programs across the country. Now in its fourth iteration, this year's orchestra featured 64 fellows selected through a competitive audition process to travel to Chicago for a transformative musical experience. Over four immersive days, fellows engaged in intensive rehearsals, learned from professional musicians, networked with institutional leaders, and built meaningful connections with peers who share similar experiences.

This year also marked the expansion of Equity Arc's paid internship program, welcoming seven fellows into roles focused on four key areas. Interns gained hands-on experience in arts administration and contributed to key elements of the fellow experience, including the panel discussion, a college and summer study fair, and content creation for social media.

Under the baton of Maestro Kyle Dickson, the Pathways Orchestra rehearsed and performed alongside musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Fellows also participated in sectionals led by CSO members. The culminating concert featured Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Ballade in A minor and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 performed for a sold-out audience at Symphony Center. We were honored to welcome Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and First Lady MK Pritzker as special guests.

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)



"The collective impact project is working, the students are excelling, and we need to keep going with renewed focus in the face of challenges."

—Aimee Halbruner, Levine Music, VP Music Education

National Collective for Musical Pathways

The National Collective for Musical Pathways is an alliance of rigorous pre-college music training programs committed to removing barriers and accelerating the progress of BIPOC musicians. Members of the Collective meet monthly to connect and work with their counterparts across the country. In addition to participating in data and funding projects, program managers also nominate their students to audition for the Equity Arc Pathways Orchestra.

Highlights from this year include:

- The inaugural Instrument Fund awarded \$150,000 of grant funding to Pathways musicians
- The Equity Arc Pathways Orchestra performed for a sold-out crowd at Symphony Center in Chicago
- Pathways alumni were engaged to participate on panels and work with Equity Arc's staff
- Pathways Orchestra fellows were accepted into over 60 colleges and conservatories



Instrument Fund

Equity Arc launched our inaugural Instrument Fund with the generous support of the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation. Through a rigorous selection process, 17 pathways musicians on the cusp of collegiate study were selected for a total of \$150,000 in instrument funding to support their ongoing artistic development.

Following the purchase of their instruments, grantees will share annual reflections for three years, offering insight into how the new instrument is shaping their musical studies and supporting key milestones in their artistic growth.

2025 Instrument Fund Grantees



Danae Truxler
Instrument: Violin Bow

"With this bow, I'm inspired to continue deepening my understanding of comfortable, controlled violin playing. Paired with my higher quality violin, my hope for the future is that I'll find my best, most mature voice. I'm excited and thankful for the continued advancement I know I will experience with my new bow. Receiving this grant fills me with both gratitude and humility."



Ethan Alvarez
Instrument: Cello

"Receiving this award is a physical manifestation of the hard work I've put into my musical career. Not only is this a major milestone for me, but also a blessing. It's always amazing to be recognized for hard work and this grant is the perfect validation. With my new instrument I'll be able to grow to the best of my abilities and it will be a perfect tool for preparing for college auditions and competitions."



Felicity Zhao

Instrument: Horn

"Having this horn will let me solely focus on bettering myself as a horn player, and I will continue my studies at Boston Conservatory at Berklee in the fall. Music has completely changed my life as a musician, an artist and a person. Thanks to Equity Arc, I now have the resources to spread the unyielding power of music."



Jackson Jeffrey

Instrument: Horn

"The purchase of this instrument is helping me flourish musically. My goal is to perform in a professional symphony. I also plan to open a French Horn studio to assist students from all walks of life, especially disadvantaged youth. With the purchase of this instrument, I can compete on local, state, national, and international levels. This professional level French Horn has a consistent sound quality. The beautiful sound has more resonance. It produces a fuller sound. I love practicing because the sound fills the entire room."



Jaiveion Benjamin

Instrument: Viola

"Through my experience as a violist, I have experienced significant growth both personally and musically. Playing the viola provides me with the opportunity to focus on self-improvement, learning valuable life skills that are essential for personal development, and functioning effectively within society."



Liliana Ortiz

Instrument: Oboe

"Receiving the award toward a new oboe has been a transformative milestone in my musical journey. As a developing oboist, the opportunity to play on a professional level instrument has already begun to elevate my technical growth and artistic expression. With this support, I will be able to participate more competitively in auditions, festivals, and advanced studies with more confidence in my abilities."



Lorenzo Ye

Instrument: Cello

"This award's significance extends far beyond financial support—it validates my artistic vision and removes a critical barrier that has limited my expression. For years, I was constrained by rental instruments that couldn't fully realize my musical ideas. Now, with my own professional cello from Johnson's, I can pursue my aspirations without compromise. The impact of this award will resonate through every note I play, every student I mentor through my nonprofit, and every composition I create."



Paloma Furst Chavira

Instrument: Violin Bow

"The Equity Arc grant made it possible for me to purchase a bow crafted by the French bow maker Claude Thomassin. In the process of trying new bows, I learned so much about what to listen for and what makes each bow unique. I am amazed at how much of a difference the right bow can make—the tone I can now produce is fuller, and I can more easily shape and change its character. The balance and playability of this bow will help me advance my technique as I take on more challenging repertoire."



Paulette Alvarez dela Cadena

Instrument: Violin

"This grant represents a chance to pursue music at the highest level, break barriers, and be the first in my family to turn a love for music into a meaningful career."



Ricardo Cruz

Instrument: Percussion

"Having access to quality percussion instruments at home is extremely beneficial to my growth as a musician, allowing me to practice more frequently and develop the technical skills needed to excel in performance and audition situations."



Saul Cirilo

Instrument: Trumpet

"Receiving this award means a lot to me and will make a big difference in my musical journey. It shows that my hard work and passion for music are being recognized, and that gives me more confidence to keep going. I am very thankful for this wonderful opportunity, and I am excited to keep learning, growing and sharing music with others."



Sydney Vance

Instrument: Percussion

"Equity Arc's support tells me that my voice and my future in music matter. It feels like a community is standing beside me, investing in my potential and helping remove barriers that too often keep young artists from reaching their next step. This marimba will shape my daily work, strengthen my artistry, and expand my dreams. Thank you, Equity Arc, for the instrument that is not just an instrument, but an opening door."



Travis Phillips

Instrument: Double Bass and Bow

"Receiving this award towards a new bass enables me to perform at a higher level in solo recitals and within my youth orchestra. This instrument has a nice low register and is very comfortable to play. I really enjoy playing in different halls, because the sound of my new bass is very full. With my new instrument, I will be ready to record for college auditions and hopefully stand out."



Ugo Nwakanma

Instrument: Trombone

"Receiving the Equity Arc Instrument Grant has been transformative for my musical growth! It allowed me to purchase a custom Edwards bass trombone. This is an instrument that matches my potential as a performer. The craftsmanship and responsiveness of this instrument make playing feel efficient and easier, allowing me to focus on musical expression rather than physical limitations with equipment. This opportunity will aid me greatly in my pursuit of a career in music. With this instrument, I am eager to audition for summer festivals, perform at a higher level, and continue growing within the Blair School of Music community. I can't wait to continue my journey and be able to help others the same way I was helped along this path. I am grateful to Equity Arc for investing in me and other young musicians."



Vanessa Cabrera
Instrument: Horn

"The new instrument, with its detachable bell and improved tone quality, not only makes traveling easier but also gives me the confidence to perform at a higher level. It responds more clearly, allows me to express myself more freely, and supports the demands of the advanced music I'm playing. This opportunity has made me feel seen and supported as a young artist. With this horn, I feel more ready than ever to pursue my dream of becoming a professional musician. I'm excited to take on new challenges, audition for more festivals, and keep working toward college and a future career in performance."



Veronica Anzola
Instrument: Violin

"I am super grateful to Equity Arc, Jamila Tekalli, and Professor Enrique Reynosa through the Washington Musical Pathways Initiative for believing in me. I will make sure this opportunity is worth every effort. I'm committed to making the most of it not only to grow artistically, but also to share my music with others, to inspire new generations, and to pass on the hope and joy that I myself feel when I play."



Waverly Alexander
Instrument: Violin

"When I am in the practice room, I enjoy exploring my musical intentions. However, as much as I enjoy experimenting with my intent, it can be frustrating to explore when your instrument does not respond in an ideal manner. With the purchase of this new instrument, I find that the potential for my musical development has expanded. I sincerely appreciate that I was chosen to be a recipient of this grant, and I look forward to advancing myself as an artist with my new instrument."

Equity Arc Wind Symphony

The inaugural Equity Arc Wind Symphony, scheduled for May 1–4, 2025, and planned in collaboration with The President’s Own United States Marine Band, was canceled in mid-February following the issuance of an Executive Order affecting federal DEI initiatives. In response, Equity Arc acted quickly to engage retired members of premier military and military academy bands, preserving the mentorship and performance experiences at the heart of the Wind Symphony Fellows program.

In doing so, Equity Arc seized an opportunity to reshape nearly 18 months of planning, bringing 22 young musicians accepted to the Wind Symphony through a competitive national audition, alongside 28 retired professional military musicians, to Washington, D.C. for a weekend of intensive music-making and mentorship. Students rehearsed and performed alongside seasoned professionals, engaged in small-group sectionals, shared meals and conversations, and gained firsthand insight into the careers and experiences of professional military musicians. The weekend culminated in the Wind Symphony’s inaugural performance at The Music Center at Strathmore on March 9, 2025, under the direction of Music Director Rodney Dorsey.

CBS’s 60 Minutes captured the power of this weekend, telling the story of the fellows and veteran musicians and highlighting both the fellows’ musical excellence and the community that came together to ensure they received the musical experience they earned. The segment aired on March 16, 2025, reaching more than two million viewers. The full concert performance has since received over 90,000 views on YouTube, with the original segment surpassing two million views overall. This story continues to inspire audiences nationwide and underscores Equity Arc’s commitment to ensuring that talented musicians of color have access to the mentorship, resources, and opportunities necessary to successfully pursue careers as professional performers.





Collegiate Access for Young Musicians

This season, Equity Arc partnered with El Sistema USA to pilot a new virtual series, Collegiate Access for Young Musicians, designed to support students and families as they navigate the college music admissions process. The series expanded access to critical knowledge, expert guidance, and practical resources, helping demystify an often complex pathway to higher education in music.

Through interactive sessions led by a diverse group of professionals, more than 200 participants explored key aspects of the college application journey, including identifying best-fit music programs, preparing strong, authentic application materials, planning for college costs, navigating the financial aid process, and developing self-advocacy skills for higher education. Presenters included college admissions professionals, financial aid specialists, application consultants, collegiate faculty, and university deans, offering participants various perspectives and insights into the college admissions process.

By equipping students and families with knowledge, resources and expert guidance, Collegiate Access for Young Musicians created equitable access to the information and opportunities that shape long-term success, empowering participants to take informed and confident steps toward their futures in music.

Moving Forward

This year affirmed Equity Arc's capacity to grow with intention amid complexity. Across programs, convenings, and partnerships, we deepened our focus on what matters most: creating access to excellence, supporting musicians and families at critical moments, and sustaining collaboration across a national field navigating real change. Throughout this work, we remained committed to reinforcing the importance of intensive training, high standards, and artistic excellence within equity-focused efforts.

The work reflected in this report demonstrates how thoughtful investment, adaptive leadership, and shared commitment translate into meaningful opportunity. Equity Arc's programs are generating lasting positive impact for the musicians we serve, while also producing critical insights that are shaping our next phase of work. Our ability to steward this impact is grounded in remaining disciplined in our approach and intentional about how we build on what we are learning.

As Equity Arc moves forward, we remain guided by the belief that progress is built collectively, that pathways are strengthened through clarity and care, and that the future of classical music is shaped by the talent, preparation, and promise of the musicians we serve. In a field navigating real and ongoing change, we are committed to remaining resilient in our focus and clear-eyed about where Equity Arc can bring the most value and sustain the greatest impact.



Equity Arc Leadership

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Mark Churchill, El Sistema USA, Founder

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