



Edmonton Youth Orchestra Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Adopted November 25, 2025

1. Purpose and Commitment

EYO is committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment for all young musicians. We believe that diversity strengthens our organization and enriches the musical experience. We strive to create an accessible and supportive space where musicians of all backgrounds can thrive.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all EYO members, staff, conductors, board members, volunteers, and affiliated community members. It guides our practices in recruitment, auditions, programming, leadership, and community engagement.

3. Core Principles

Diversity

We value representation of young musicians from a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, as well as diversity in gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and physical and cognitive abilities. We recognize that every young musician brings unique perspectives, traditions, and experiences that enrich the orchestra as a whole. By reflecting the diversity of our broader community, we aim to inspire and cultivate cultural understanding.

Equity

We are committed to removing barriers that prevent young musicians from fully participating in the orchestra and accessing the benefits of being part of a music community. Equity means recognizing that not all young musicians begin with the same resources or opportunities and taking intentional steps to provide access to financial assistance, specialty instruments, and mentorship. We ensure that our audition process is fair, and that rehearsals and performances are accessible to all musician members.

Through bursaries, and community partnerships, we strive to reduce financial and systemic obstacles. Equity also requires us to listen actively to the needs of our members, adapt policies and practices as circumstances evolve, and continuously work to create a level playing field where every young musician can succeed and grow.



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Inclusion

We cultivate an environment where every young musician feels respected, supported, and valued for who they are. In the EYO, inclusion means more than welcoming differences; it is about ensuring that all voices are heard, contributions are recognized, and everyone has a genuine sense of belonging within the orchestra. We are committed to creating rehearsal, performance, and community spaces that are free from discrimination, bias, or exclusionary practices. By fostering a culture of inclusion, we empower all young people to grow artistically, personally, and socially within EYO.

4. Commitments and Actions

A. Recruitment and Retention

EYO is committed to ensuring that the opportunity to join our orchestra is accessible, fair, and welcoming to all young musicians. To achieve this, we will:

- Promote EYO through diverse platforms, including schools, cultural organizations, and programs serving historically underrepresented populations.
- Continue to provide virtual or recorded auditions to accommodate students facing transportation, scheduling, or accessibility challenges.
- Offer clear and supportive guidance, such as “what to expect” resources and sample excerpts, to help reduce barriers for first-time applicants.
- Provide workshops and sectional rehearsals, mentorship opportunities, or practice sessions for all member musicians
- Offer access to specialty instruments to enable and encourage musical growth and ensure successful instrumentation for each orchestra.
- Build long-term relationships with private teachers, school music directors, and community music programs.
- Create student ambassador and/or mentor roles that allow current orchestra members to visit schools and share their experiences, inspiring younger musicians from diverse backgrounds to participate.



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B. Financial Accessibility

EYO is committed to ensuring that financial circumstances never prevent a young musician from participating. To reduce barriers and promote equitable access, we will:

- Offer need-based bursaries to ensure that young musicians from all economic backgrounds can participate.
- Publicize financial aid opportunities and streamline the application process to encourage families to apply without stigma.
- Review membership fee structures regularly to ensure they remain fair and accessible.
- Maintain an instrument lending program for young musicians who cannot afford to purchase or rent specialty instruments.
- Partner with music stores, donors, and foundations to expand the availability and quality of loaned instruments.
- Collaborate with schools, community organizations, and cultural groups to identify and support qualified young musicians who may experience barriers in accessing orchestral programs.
- Seek grants and sponsorship opportunities to increase participation among underrepresented or underserved communities.

C. Repertoire and Programming

EYO recognizes that programming choices reflect our values and directly shape the experiences of our musicians and audiences. To celebrate diversity and expand cultural awareness, we will strive to:

- Program works by composers from historically underrepresented groups, including women, composers of color, and indigenous voices.
- Incorporate works that reflect varied cultural traditions of our local and global community.
- Curate concerts that highlight classical repertoire with exposure to works from diverse genres and cultural traditions.
- Highlight themes that connect music to issues of identity, history, and community.



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- Invite guest conductors, performers, and musicians who bring a wide range of cultural, artistic, and professional perspectives.

D. Organizational Leadership and Training

EYO believes that representation and awareness in leadership are key to sustaining a culture of equity and inclusion. To embed DEI into our governance and decision-making, we will:

- Support diverse representation among members, staff, conductors, board members, and volunteers.
- Recruit leaders and board members who reflect the communities we serve.
- Provide access to training for staff, conductors, and board members on relevant topics such as implicit bias, inclusive teaching practices, and cultural competency.
- Establish a dedicated committee to assess, guide, and monitor DEI progress.
- Use committee feedback to adjust policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

E. Safe and Inclusive Environment

EYO is committed to maintaining a supportive environment where all members feel safe and valued. To ensure this, we will:

- Enforce a strict zero-tolerance stance toward discrimination, harassment, bullying, or exclusionary behavior.
- Apply this policy consistently to all members, staff, and affiliated community members.
- Provide accessible and confidential ways for members and families to report DEI concerns.
- Train staff and leadership on how to respond to reports with fairness, compassion, and accountability.
- Ensure rehearsal and performance spaces meet accessibility standards for musicians with physical disabilities.



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- Adapt communication and learning approaches to support young musicians with diverse learning needs.
- Regularly review practices to identify and remove barriers for participation.

5. Accountability and Review

To ensure that the EYO continues to achieve our DEI commitments we will maintain a structured and transparent approach to accountability:

- Conduct annual evaluations of recruitment, participation, and membership data to track progress | diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Use data-driven insights and membership feedback to guide continues improvement.
- Review this DEI policy annually to ensure it remains relevant, practical, and responsive to evolving organizational needs.
- Update commitments and strategies as necessary, incorporating input from the DEI committee, board members, and stakeholders.
- Highlight successes, identify areas for growth, and communicate next steps in a clear and accessible manner.



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6. Reporting and Feedback

Concerns regarding diversity, equity, or inclusion should be reported to any of the following:

- The Chair of the DEI Committee
Dr. Nkolika Anyabolu
nkolika.anyabolu@gmail.com
- EYO General Manager
Mackenzie Tennessen
info@edmontonyouthorchestra.com
- The President of the Board of Directors
James Merkosky
james.d.merkosky@pwc.com

Revision History

Originally Adopted November 25, 2025