



**ASPEN MUSIC  
FESTIVAL  
AND SCHOOL**

# INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

**AMFS COMMITMENTS TOWARD INCLUSION**

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**2024 REPORT**



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## IDEA COMMITTEE

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**At-large:** Khori Dastoor, alumnus and industry partner; Joaquín Valdepeñas, artist-faculty; Fonda Paterson, Board of Trustees member; Michael Klein, Board of Trustees president; DeMarre McGill, artist-faculty; Anthony Trionfo, alumnus

**Staff:** Daniel Benavent, Azusa Chapman, Patrick Chamberlain, Kristin Cleveland, Jennifer Elliot, Charlie Fields, Alan Fletcher, Ronte' Hardy, Heather Kendrick Stanton, Veronica Lopez, Mi Ryung Song

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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During the summer of 2020, the Aspen Music Festival and School began an intensive internal process of examining its practices and goals regarding inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA). During the process it identified areas for improvement and committed itself to change in those areas. The seven areas of commitment include: Student Body, Faculty, Stages, Board of Trustees, Training, Measurement of Impact, and Commitment to Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley. These commitments included both measurable goals and targeted outcomes.

From summer 2020 through summer 2023, the AMFS made significant changes, implementing practices and policies that increased inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Among these successes, key were: **1)** the AMFS's extraordinary achievements in diversifying student demographics and increasing fellowship and scholarship opportunities for historically underrepresented students; **2)** first meeting, then surpassing the goal to feature a conductor, soloist, or composer of color in—at minimum—75 percent of the AMFS's main-stage programming; and **3)** training for AMFS staff and increased community relationships, which have been a keystone in nurturing an environment of inclusivity throughout the Festival.

The success of these commitments was positive and informative. As we begin 2024, the AMFS will establish the next phase of work in these important arenas.

## INTRODUCTION

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During the summer of 2020, the AMFS began an intensive internal process examining its practices and goals regarding inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. We assembled a committee of Board members, artist-faculty, alumni, and staff who worked closely with Justin Laing, a consultant specializing in IDEA initiatives, to examine current practices of the AMFS and re-imagine our future. Our goal was to determine a path forward toward greater justice in our own work and as a leader in a field that has been historically white in culture and creation.

After a great deal of heart-driven discussion, we arrived at a **Statement of Commitment** that represented the organization's starting point for this critical work and launched the AMFS into a new level of commitment to change. The commitments outlined in the document touched on seven different areas of the organization and reflected our desire to affect what happens within the Aspen Music Festival and School and beyond.

- 1. STUDENT BODY**
- 2. FACULTY**
- 3. STAGES**
- 4. BOARD OF TRUSTEES**
- 5. TRAINING**
- 6. MEASUREMENT OF IMPACT**
- 7. COMMITMENT TO THE ROARING FORK VALLEY**

It is important to emphasize that the exploration that led to these commitments represented a starting point for our work and is ongoing. Now that we have completed three years of advancing these initiatives, we are pleased to report our progress.

**Note:** *In the following pages, the numbered commitments and blue explanatory text following each of them reflect the original text as written in 2020.*

## COMMITMENT #1 | Student Body

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*Every year we invite a number of black, indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) students who are not able to afford to attend the AMFS. We believe this reflects structural racism. In the interest of social justice, we will establish 10–20 additional fellowships for Black, Latin, and Indigenous students. These fellowships will be new and will not reduce the current fellowships available.*

This commitment requires a multi-faceted approach, including **financial support, student recruitment**, and an examination of—and changes to—the **student experience**.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support for students remains a critical component in advancing equity, and includes both fellowships (which include tuition, travel, housing, and stipend) and full and partial tuition scholarships.

As of December 2021, **AMFS secured funding for 15 additional fellowships for BIPOC students** to be awarded over the next two years. In 2022, seven fellowships were distributed with the balance awarded in

In addition to continued pursuit of growth in student diversity beyond the current targets, the **AMFS 2024 Strategic Plan** includes endowing at least two additional scholarships for BIPOC students.

2023. AMFS currently has nearly \$2M in endowed funds for student diversity. **In 2023, 69 percent of BIPOC-identifying students attended the Festival on full scholarships that included tuition, fees, room, and board.**

It is worth noting that the AMFS has a long and robust history of supporting minority students. **The Wilkinson Foundation** and **Questrom Foundation Fellowships** (established in 2005 and 2009, respectively) alone have supported nearly 300 students.

Since the inception of these leading support funds, AMFS has experienced a 382-percent increase in restricted annual fund donations for student diversity, a 222-percent increase in applicant diversity, and a 99-percent increase in admissions diversity.

The **AMFS 2024 Strategic Plan** includes the target of increasing the overall number of students on fellowship from just under 58 percent (2023) to 70 percent. Additionally, the plan recommends that all gifts supporting student aid are as unrestricted as possible, allowing AMFS the flexibility to apply various strategies, targeting programs, diversity, scholarships versus fellowships, travel, and stipend, etc.

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of students requires analysis and strategy. Of the various methods AMFS has employed, developing relationships with other organizations that are also dedicated to advancing this work has been particularly instrumental.

- In 2022, AMFS entered a partnership with the **National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS)**, an unprecedented national initiative to increase diversity in American orchestras. NAAS does this work by offering Black and Latine musicians a customized combination of mentoring, audition preparation, financial support, and audition previews. The Alliance comprises the Sphinx Organization, the lead program administrator and fiscal agent for the group; the New World Symphony, and the League of American Orchestras, which represents 700 orchestras. As part of this agreement, the **AMFS pays annual dues which go directly to musician stipends to defray audition expenses, as well as to coaching and mentoring fees and travel associated with audition preparation. Additionally, the AMFS offers application fee waivers to all NAAS applicants.**
- **The Sphinx Orchestral Partners Auditions (SOPA) Excerpt Competition** provides Black and Latine orchestral musicians the unique opportunity to audition for a panel representing several orchestras seeking to identify musicians for invitations to audition, pre-advancement at auditions, and/or placement on substitute player lists. **In 2022, the AMFS invited 89 SOPA applicants to apply for admission to the 2023 season with a waived application fee based on their performances in the SOPA competition.**
- The AMFS has assisted in the creation of the **Alliance of Black Orchestral Percussionists (ABOP)**, a new national group supporting young Black percussionists with mentoring and financial support. AMFS President and CEO Alan Fletcher is a founding board member of ABOP, supporting its mission and growth.

These partnerships represent only a portion of the AMFS's recruitment strategies; new methods are in development, including strengthening and expanding our connections to music schools and training programs around the world.

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Every student's Festival experience is based in study, performance, and community. Recognizing the importance of inclusion and belonging among our student population, the AMFS continues to develop opportunities to bring students together in unity and promote allyship.

In 2023, AMFS initiated student **affinity group mixers** during Welcome Week for students who identified as BIPOC, female, LGBTQIA+, and those 17 and under, providing a space for underrepresented students to find community belonging. The 2023 season also included an inaugural **Community Pride Celebration** and the second annual **Mariachi Celebration**, connecting students to one other and the community at large.

## RESULTS

Based on the following national census data and metrics published by the League of American Orchestras in 2020, the AMFS established a five-year goal **to increase diversity enrollment to 14 percent of the student body.**

### National Census Data

U.S. population that identifies as Black or African American:	13.6%
U.S. population that identifies as Hispanic/Latine:	18.9%

### Diversity in Classical Music (from the League of American Orchestras)

Musicians who identify as Black/African American:	1.8%
Musicians who identify as Hispanic/Latine:	2.5%
Musicians who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander:	9%

When considering these data, it is important to note the variations of demographic classifications.

### IPEDS Classification

As an institution of higher learning, the AMFS is required to utilize the National Center for Education Statistic's **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)** for application and admissions data. The IPEDS classification identifies diversity as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latina/o, Native American or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

**Diversity representation among AMFS students, using the IPEDS classifications, has increased from 10 percent in 2018 to 16 percent in 2023**, exceeding our goals despite an overall decrease in application submissions from pre-pandemic totals. Moreover, the AMFS has become increasingly selective with a rate of admission that is lower than it has ever been, demonstrating that increasing diversity does not mean lowering standards. Although progress is slow, we know that recruitment efforts have become increasingly effective in addressing inequities in our summer student body.

Of the total number of applications submitted in 2023 (1,918), approximately 12 percent (228) were candidates from underrepresented identities as follows. (Please note that applicants may select multiple identities.)

- Native American or Alaska Native: **8**
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: **4**
- Black or African American: **70**
- Hispanic or Latine: **164**

### AMELIA Classification

Additionally, the AMFS has elected to survey students based on the **African, Middle Eastern, Latin, Indigenous, and Asian (AMELIA)** classification system. The primary difference with the AMELIA classification is that it includes options for Asian-identifying people (not classified within IPEDS) and Middle Eastern and North African people (who are categorized as white within the IPEDS classification). Additionally, in AMFS demographic surveys, we have included the option for participants to select multiple identities, and a fillable "other" field for those who may not identify with the presented classifications. We feel this more accurately represents the multi-cultural and worldly community of the AMFS. When we consider diversity metrics associated with AMELIA, **61 percent of the 2023 class identified as AMELIA.**

## ADMISSION STATISTICS BY ETHNICITY 2019 VERSUS 2022

	2019 Applications	2022 Applications	2019 Enrollment	2022 Enrollment
White	49%	49%	48%	43%
Asian	26%	27%	27%	30%
Hispanic	8%	7%	7%	8%
Black or African American	2%	4%	2%	4%
Native American	1%	1%	1%	0%
Pacific Islander	0%	1%	1%	0%

## COMMITMENT #2 | Artist-Faculty

*We recognize a lack of diversity in our Artist-Faculty. We will provide our students with the most well-rounded education, including a broad spectrum of musical perspectives, while simultaneously increasing opportunity for African, Middle Eastern, Latin, Indigenous, and Asian (AMELIA) teaching musicians by making efforts to diversify our faculty at every hiring opportunity. This commitment does not contain an objective benchmark to meet or miss. However, hiring Artist-Faculty who meet the AMELIA designation remains a priority.*

The AMFS has made several significant hires in the last three years, further diversifying our Artist-Faculty. Given the longevity of faculty relationships with the AMFS and the small number of faculty (106 in 2023), there are few opportunities to add faculty.

During a 2023 staff training, AMFS staff was introduced to the concept of Mirrors and Windows. Mirrors allow people to see themselves represented in an organization or field; whereas Windows only allow people to see into an experience from the outside. AMFS strives to create mirrors for students of color both in our programming and our faculty. When students who rarely see people like themselves in the field of Classical Music are able to see themselves in our faculty, it sends a message that they belong—at the AMFS, and in the world of Classical Music.

## COMMITMENT #3 | Stages

*As a part of the larger movement to address the lack of diversity on the stages of classical music, it is our responsibility to find and promote African, Middle Eastern, Latin, Indigenous, and Asian (AMELIA) musicians. We will particularly focus on the creation of new repertoire, especially larger orchestral works, and operas, because that is where we see the greatest deficits. By the summer 2022 season, 75 percent of our headlining programs will feature an AMELIA soloist, conductor, and/or composer.*

Since 2022, the AMFS has consistently met or exceeded its target of featuring artists and/or composers of color in 75 percent of main-stage performances. The AMFS continues intensive research into historically overlooked composers and important artistic voices of today who represent diverse backgrounds. Resources such as the Sphinx Organization, the League of American Orchestras, and databases from the Institute for Composer Diversity have been particularly useful.

A significant effort is being made in commissioning AMELIA composers. Commissioning new works is an important indicator of an institution's priorities as it puts financial and artistic resources toward the creation and incubation of new work. Important recent and upcoming projects include a significant new orchestral work from Joel Thompson (which the AMFS workshoped), a new song cycle devoted to African Queens for soprano Karen Slack, a new ensemble work by Jessie Montgomery, and an orchestral work by Shelly Washington.

Of note, the AMFS's 2021 and 2022 seasons explored the theme “**Uncommon Women of Note**,” which focused on musical contributions by women. The AMFS applied a female lens to questions of ambition, identity, and desire that shape shared musical traditions. As part of this theme, audiences enjoyed new pieces from contemporary composers such as Gabriela Lena Frank, Tebogo Monnakgotla, inti figgis-vizueta, Clarice Assad, Du Yun, Maria Schneider, Kaija Saariaho, Reena Esmail, Jasmine Barnes, Errollyn Wallen, and Shelley Washington.

Works long unheard and by under-represented composers such as Margaret Allison Bonds, Florence Price, Grazyna Bacewicz, Louise Farrenc, Fanny Hensel Mendelssohn, Julia Perry, and Rebecca Clarke were also featured in concert. In addition to established female conductors such as Marin Alsop and Jane Glover, Gemma New and Erina Yashima made their conducting debuts on AMFS stages.

The AMFS became a co-curating, educational partner of **Arts Engines**, a video podcast highlighting thought leaders and game-changers who are creating significant impact in the field of the arts. Hosted by Aaron Dworkin, Arts Engines seeks to inspire, share, empower, challenge, and connect diverse audiences with the most influential leaders in our field.

With Arts Engines, the AMFS has co-presented AMFS alumnus and conductor Roderick Cox; Bryant Welters, director of the Vincent Wilkinson Foundation; and composer Joel Thompson. Several AMFS artist-faculty members and guest artists also have appeared, including Titus Underwood, Weston Sprott, and composer Gabriela Lena Frank.

## COMMITMENT #4 | Board of Trustees

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*We will diversify our Board by actively recruiting African, Middle Eastern, Latin, Indigenous, and Asian (AMELIA) members. Having considered the obstacles to increasing diversity, AMFS commits to a change in our implicit policy that individuals must have a residence in Aspen to serve on our Board. Our goal is to increase AMELIA representation from 6 percent to 16 percent.*

Since the initial Commitments were established, AMELIA representation on the Board of Trustees and the Corporation has increased and there are several AMELIA-identifying candidates under review. AMFS has not collected self-reported demographic information from the Board and Corporation; additionally, we have shifted our objective to include not only demographic variation, but a broader scope including professional, academic, and lived expertise.

It is worth noting that by design, the AMFS Corporation, which provides oversight to the Board of Trustees, was created with an intentional variation in collective expertise. Per the organization by-laws, the Corporation shall have at least 60 percent of its voting members classified as Corporate Faculty. Of these, the by-laws mandate that 11 Corporate Faculty members must be seated on the Board.

As of 2023, the Corporation is composed of 77 Corporate Faculty, 15 at-large members, 39 Board of Trustee lay members, eight Honorary or Lifetime Trustees, the President, and two ex-officio members.

We believe this broad variety of experience and expertise contributes to the critical conversations occurring within leadership. This structure also places Artist-Faculty in a position of influence, which is paramount to the mission of the organization. It is not a requirement that AMFS Board members must have a residence in Aspen, allowing for a broader representation of people who may live elsewhere.

It is important to note the impressive number of women who have held roles in senior leadership within AMFS. In 2023, 75 percent of the senior leadership positions were held by women; this is in comparison to 51 percent women in top executive positions in the orchestra field, per the Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity Report by the League of American Orchestras. Notably, 5 of the 16 (31 percent) current and past Board Chairpersons identify as female.

Reviewing the list of Trustees beginning in 1954, there has almost always been an equal balance of male and female representation on the Board. Of note, the initial 1949 festival, the **Goethe Bicentennial Convocation and Music Festival**, was founded by Walter Paepcke and Elizabeth Paepcke, with considerable collaboration by Mrs. Beatrice Spachner, who would go on to serve as Vice President and Chair of the Music Committee for the first several years. From its inception, the AMFS has set a precedent of having women in leadership positions.

## COMMITMENT #5 | Training

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*To stay abreast of the ways in which the field is confronting issues of IDEA, we commit to biannual staff workshops and Board discussions concerning the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, and religious identity. All staff will receive training in how to build a more inclusive culture.*

The AMFS committed to biannual staff workshops concerning the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, and religious identity. Year-round and summer staff have participated in numerous training opportunities:

Dr. Georgina Garcia	June 2021	<i>Bias and Microaggressions</i>
	Nov. 2021	<i>Culturally Responsive Leaders</i>
	Dec. 2021	<i>Culturally Responsive Environments and Bystanders</i>
Orchestrate Inclusion	June 2022	<i>Mitigating Bias</i>
	Jan. 2023	<i>Inclusive Hiring and Recognizing and Counteracting Bias</i>
Equity Praxis Group	June 2023	<i>Privilege and Power Dynamics</i>
	Nov. 2023	<i>Inclusion, Common Language, Mirrors and Windows</i>
	Jan. 2024	<i>Difficult Conversations and Interaction Safety</i>

In addition to training sessions, a number of initiatives centered around inclusivity in the AMFS community have been undertaken by the IDEA committee and other staff, including:

- A draft Inclusive Language and Terminology Style Guide for staff use.
- A virtual collection of IDEA-related resources and information for year-round staff, including training materials, industry data, and best practices.
- The marketing and artistic departments have revised historical and educational materials to include mention of the original inhabitants of the Roaring Fork Valley.
- Opportunity for staff to include pronouns in email signatures, name tags and other places of key importance.
- For many years, the performance attire required of students and faculty has been ungendered, not specifying attire based on binary traditions.
- The staff seminar on inclusive hiring practices and implicit bias resulted in the creation of the AMFS [Inclusive Hiring Practices Checklist](#). AMFS continues to refine its practices in staff recruitment, retention, and exit surveying.
- In 2023, the IDEA Committee, in collaboration with faculty and staff, began the process of creating a **VALUES Statement** to further define AMFS's commitment to our community and culture.

## COMMITMENT #6 | Measurement of Impact

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*We will annually survey students, Artist-Faculty, staff, and Board members to learn how they feel we have lived our deepened commitment to IDEA. This information will be reviewed by a committee to verify that we are making progress.*

Within this commitment, the AMFS had two key intentions. First, we wanted to accurately track the demographics of our various constituencies. Secondly, we wanted to survey our community about their perception of our progress toward the IDEA Commitments.

### DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEYS

In 2021, a standardized self-reporting demographic survey was created for staff, artist-faculty, board, and students. Although survey completion has not reached its potential, the data are informative. The following statement is included on all surveys conducted:

*All responses are anonymous. Race and ethnicity are complex social constructs that do not fully represent one's holistic identity. We acknowledge that having to label oneself in such a way can be a difficult experience.*

Moving forward, the AMFS will continue to collect demographic data, incentivize survey participation, better account for cross-sectionalism, and seek consistency in surveying across all constituencies.



## AMFS DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY RESULTS

	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
	Students	Students	Students	Board	Board	Faculty	Winter Staff	Winter Staff	Summer Staff	Summer Staff
Eligible	264	425	456	48	49	107	31	36	76	96%
Responded	216	376	425	19	25	71	28	29	68	50%
Participation percentage	82%	88%	93%	40%	51%	66%	87%	81%	89%	52%
Female	39%	44%	45%	37%	52%	30%	65%	48%	54%	55%
Male	60%	54%	53%	63%	44%	64%	23%	41%	34%	41%
Nonbinary or transgender	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	7%	2%
Prefer not to answer			2%	0%	0%	3%	0%	10%	1%	2%
Under 20	4%	16%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	4%
Ages 20-29	81%	78%	79%	0%	0%	3%	18%	24%	72%	81%
Ages 30-39	15%	6%	7%	0%	0%	8%	32%	24%	15%	10%
Ages 40-49	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	12%	14%	17%	4%	3%
Ages 50-59	0%	0%	0%	11%	12%	24%	25%	10%	1%	1%
Age 60-69	0%	0%	0%	21%	28%	31%	11%	14%	0%	—
Ages 70-79	0%	0%	0%	58%	40%	18%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Over 80 years	0%	0%	0%	11%	16%	3%	0%	0%	0%	—
Prefer not to answer	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	10%	0%	
Asian	37%	43%	42%	0%	0%	14%	11%	7%	3%	17%
Caucasian	39%	28%	50%	90%	100%	66%	78%	69%	69%	81%
Hispanic	8%	10%	11%	11%	0%	6%	4%	3%	10%	8%
Black or African-American	3%	4%	6%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%
First Nations, Indigenous, or Alaska Native	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%		0%
Multiracial		1%					4%		7%	
Middle Eastern		1%	1%	0%	0%	1%		0%	1%	0%
Pacific Islander				0%	0%	3%		0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to answer	13%	12%	4%	0%	0%	8%	0%	14%	3%	0%
Able-bodied			94%	90%	92%	93%	96%	90%	79%	86%
Disabled		4%	1%	10%	8%	3%	0%	0%	4%	4%
Identify as other				0%	0%		0%		6%	
Prefer not to answer			6%	0%	0%	4%	4%	10%	7%	10%
Heterosexual			72%	95%	92%	70%	85%	69%	65%	59%
LGBTQIA+	12%	16%	16%	0%	4%	21%	15%	17%	27%	31%
Prefer not to answer			13%	5%	4%	9%	0%	14%	8%	10%

Shaded areas indicate this response was not surveyed.

Conscious of the many ways in which people may feel unequal or othered, the question, “Have you had other experiences that could contribute to exclusion in the workplace or industry?” was added to all surveys beginning in late 2022. The following table shows the responses.

	2023 Students	2022 Winter Staff	2022 Summer Staff	2023 Summer Staff
<i>Have you had other experiences that could contribute to exclusion in the workplace or industry?</i>				
Poverty or socio-economic disadvantage	32%	11%	6%	33%
Immigration or citizenship status	34%	4%	6%	20%
Difference in educational background	25%	4%	6%	27%
Age	25%	11%	0%	53%
Marital status	7%	7%	0%	7%
English is not my primary language	40%			13%

**PERCEPTION OF PROGRESS SURVEYS**

We are extremely interested in understanding the experiences of those within the AMFS community, and to that end, we have included open-ended survey questions as part of our annual demographic surveys: ***Was the AMFS a supportive environment for you? What other goals or initiatives related to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access would you like to see the AMFS pursue?***

These survey responses are collected and reviewed by the AMFS senior staff, Student Services staff, and members of the IDEA committee.

- *“The Statement [of Commitment] does not specifically address sexism or accessibility issues. Although the specific focus of racism is good, we should continue to focus on intersectionality.”*
- *“The effort to hire more AMELIA faculty members is excellent and must continue. We should also look at the lack of gender diversity, particularly among winds and brass.”*
- *“Address the gap in economic diversity, staff-wide and community-wide (young people discount, pay-what-you-can, etc., for all programming).”*
- *“I would like to see AMFS try to engage more with the local Indigenous population (Utes) on whose land the AMFS is held. Something like an acknowledgment in the Program Guide or a statement before concerts would help with this initiative.”*

Additionally, we have held a number of round-table discussions and feedback opportunities for students to engage in discourse in a supportive environment. Comments are recognized as critical feedback, and directly inspire the future iterations of this work. We are continually adapting to create the most inspiring, safe, and nurturing environment possible.

**ADDITIONAL MEASUREMENTS OF IMPACT**

Attuned to every aspect of identity, including gender equity and socio-economic status, the AMFS has consistently followed the best practices within our industry. In 2022, the AMFS completed a pay equity study as part of the implementation of the Colorado Pay Equity Act. A cost-of-living analysis was completed, and in collaboration with the Advisory Board for the Arts Compelling Offer Survey, 10 AMFS staff positions were benchmarked with similar roles in other organizations. As a result of this survey, salary adjustments were made to several positions. AMFS will continue to give annual raises as allowed by the budget and as needed to keep pace with the cost of living.

## COMMITMENT #7 | Commitment to the Roaring Fork Valley

*We commit to work in partnership with local school districts, organizations, and communities to expand access to the arts for all. With a specific goal of more deeply engaging the Latin American community, we will create welcoming environments for all members of the Roaring Fork Valley to experience music, will produce culturally responsive music programming, and will work to remove barriers to access.*

The AMFS aims to connect local youth and families throughout Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley. School year programs include after-school beginning strings, chamber music, classical guitar, and children's choir for students, grades 2-12. We recruit in collaboration with school administrators and music teachers, so that participating students closely reflect the demographics of the school location. The 2023-24 school year marked the highest enrollment year yet with 520 students participating weekly.

During the 2021-22 school year, tuition scholarship assistance doubled due to post-pandemic need. Since then, we have continued to see increased demand for tuition and instrument scholarships, which we distribute based on [income eligibility](#) for free and reduced lunch.

Staff and dedicated teaching artists are striving to decrease barriers and increase access to music education through:

- Group classes and private lessons at nearly every local school, Aspen to Glenwood Springs.
- Extended after-school childcare and engagement for working families.
- Program information and communications in Spanish and English.
- Culturally relevant repertoire and curriculum, with mariachi education as a natural extension of our longstanding strings, guitar, and vocal programs.
- Tuition and instrument scholarships; AMFS will not turn away an interested student due to financial need.

Additionally, the Education and Community Department provides free events and music education offerings for all ages during the summer season, engaging more than 3,200 participants annually.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our collaboration with **The Concert Truck** in the summer of 2021 brought AMFS concerts to locations throughout the Roaring Fork Valley. During the 3-week residency, there were 33 free performances. Many involved community partners like Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Valley Settlement, and local libraries.

Beginning in 2021, sections of the **AMFS Program Book** were translated into Spanish. In 2022, the book featured its first original editorial in Spanish, as well as a bilingual format for the concert information, patron services, AMFS history, and community programs sections.

In 2022, the AMFS presented its first annual **Mariachi Celebration**, featuring a free three-day workshop for local students and a community performance in the Music Tent, welcoming 1,800 guests. Throughout the workshop, a highly diverse group of students (of all instrument types and ability levels, and from local communities ranging from Aspen to Rifle) learned mariachi techniques and repertoire from Colorado's best mariachi educators and the professional Denver ensemble, **Mariachi Sol de Mi Tierra**. In 2023, workshop participation doubled, engaging 85 students from 28 schools. In 2024, we expect 100 workshop participants and an expansion of the community concert and preconcert fiesta—bringing even more audience members and community partners to the Tent in celebration of Mexican music and culture.

As part of the 2024 Strategic Plan, and in honor of the 75th anniversary season, the AMFS has committed to adding 75 new tuition and instrument scholarships for local students and families.

Based on demographic surveys of the AMFS community and recognizing the high percentage of people who identify as LGBTQIA+, as well as a lack of Pride celebratory events during Pride Month, the AMFS IDEA committee hosted its first-ever **Community Pride Party** on June 29, 2023. Local organizations and nonprofits, including LGBTQIA+-specific organizations Gay For Good, Mountain Pride, and PFLAG, provided resources and information to visitors.

The 2024 season includes another **Community Pride Celebration** as part of a mini-festival themed **Sounds of Pride**. Celebrating people of LGBTQ+ identity with community events and concerts honoring the “American sound” and the Queer composers who created it, **Sounds of Pride** will engage diverse audiences and honor the anniversary of Aspen’s landmark anti-discrimination policy, the first of its kind in any Colorado municipality.

## REPORT CONCLUSION

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With this report, the AMFS concludes the initial phase of its IDEA Commitments, introduced to examine and address areas of improvement and establish goals and practices around inclusion, diversity, equity, and access within our community. We recognize this is only the beginning of a lengthy process of addressing systemic inequality within our community, nation, and world; however, we take this responsibility seriously.

The Aspen Music Festival and School remains committed to addressing issues on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access to create a more harmonious musical community.