WICHITA FALLS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
FOUAD FAKHOURI, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2025-26 SEASON
IMPACT REPORT





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SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
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The WFSO's mission is to promote symphonic music in order to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences in the Texoma community.

940-723-6202 • www.wfso.org • 1300 Lamar St. Wichita Falls, TX, 76301

This report reflects the impact of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra during the 2025–26 fiscal year and concert season (June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026).

Inside, you'll find highlights from the *Symphonic Tapestries* season's performances, education and outreach efforts, audience engagement, and financial stewardship. Together, these stories and data points illustrate how the WFSO fulfills its mission to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences across the Texoma region.

Where appropriate, the report includes both qualitative insights and quantitative measures to provide a clear, transparent picture of the orchestra's work and its broader impact. All figures reflect the most accurate information available at the time of publication and are presented using conservative assumptions.

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A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear WFSO Family,

The 2025–26 season marked the completion of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra's second year performing away from Memorial Auditorium, and what a season it was. What began as a period of transition has become a testament to what this organization is capable of when our community shows up for us.

This year, audiences showed up in force. Paid concert attendance grew by 34% over the prior season, season subscriptions increased by 11%, and more than half of all single-ticket buyers were attending a WFSO concert for the first time. The *Symphonic Tapestries* season brought five full programs to two beloved community venues, with each concert shaped not only by the music on the page, but by the people in the room.

Beyond the concert stage, the WFSO deepened its community partnerships in meaningful ways. We returned for a second year of *Estrellas y Sinfónicas* with Con Potencia and Zavala International Dance, collaborated with the Arts Council of Wichita Falls for *A Regency Affair*, and continued our free community concerts throughout the Artwalk season. Our Artist-in-Residence program logged more than 625 hours inside WFISD classrooms. Even when winter weather forced the cancellation of the Young People's Concert, TEKS-aligned curriculum reached more than 1,500 students, and we used the disruption as an opportunity to reimagine the program's future.

Inside this report, you'll find the stories and data that capture the full scope of this season's work, from performances and education to audience growth and financial stewardship. Together, they reflect an organization that has not simply maintained its mission through change, but has grown because of it.
None of this happens without you. Your support, whether through tickets, donations, advocacy, or simply showing up, makes the WFSO's work possible.

While we are disappointed that our return to Memorial Auditorium must wait another season, we remain hopeful for what lies ahead: a renewed performance space, new auditorium seating, and a homecoming worth waiting for.

With gratitude,

Alicia Deges

Alicia Deges
Executive Director

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear WFSO Supporters,

The Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra exists because of a shared belief that music matters and that vibrant cultural institutions make our entire community stronger.

The 2025-26 fiscal year was a time of meaningful growth across our organization. In addition to the growth in ticket sales and concert attendance, the Annual Fund surpassed its $200,000 goal, raising $214,479 from 192 donors, including 49 who gave to the WFSO for the very first time. These numbers reflect a deepening investment from our community in the WFSO and its future.

There were many great musical moments during the concert season. One of the highlights for me was *Woven in Song*. I thoroughly enjoyed our talented guest vocalists and the opportunity to learn more about the stories and musical impact behind some of opera's most well-known works. It was a wonderful example of how the WFSO can introduce us to music in new ways and create experiences that surprise and inspire us.

Our Board is proud to recognize the establishment of the Dale Prothro Piano Endowment. This lasting investment in the WFSO's artistic future is the type of long-term commitment that will help sustain this orchestra for generations to come. As we look ahead, the Board is embarking on a strategic planning process that will help shape the next chapter of the WFSO. Together, we are examining where we are today, where we want to go, and how we can continue building an orchestra that is artistically strong, financially sustainable, and deeply connected to the community it serves.

Thank you for your generosity, your enthusiasm, and your continued belief in the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra. We are proud of the momentum we have built and excited about the future we are building together.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Yeager
Board President

A LETTER FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of the WFSO,

The 2025–26 season was, in many ways, the fullest expression of what *Symphonic Tapestries* set out to achieve. In our second year performing away from Memorial Auditorium, we learned how to make each new space work for us — understanding its acoustics, its possibilities, and the ways we could shape the music and the experience around it.

And that experience allowed us to do something important: keep moving forward and continue to engage with our audiences in a meaningful manner.

Each of the five programs this season was shaped by that awareness. From the cinematic energy of *Hollywood Hits* to the operatic drama of *Woven in Song*. We presented great masterworks, celebrated new voices, welcomed guest artists, created opportunities for young musicians, and found new ways to bring our community into the life of the orchestra.

One evening I will especially remember was our performance of Saint-Saëns' *Organ Symphony* at First United Methodist Church. There is something extraordinary about hearing that piece performed in person. Guest organist Bradley Welch and the full orchestra filled that sanctuary with a sound I believe our audience will not soon forget — and sharing the evening with the world premiere of Gala Flagello's new work, *Athena*, made for an incredible showcase of the WFSO musicians' talent.

Some of my favorite moments, however, came from the ways our community became part of the music itself. At our holiday concert Beth Hamilton took the podium and conducted *Sleigh Ride* — the first time I have ever handed the baton to a member of our community. And during our spring concerts, young musicians from the YSO Apprentice Program joined the orchestra onstage. These are more than memorable moments. They are part of what it means to build an orchestra that belongs to its community.

To our audiences, donors, musicians, volunteers, staff, and community partners: thank you for continuing to show up, support the orchestra, and believe in what we can create together. Your commitment has allowed the WFSO not simply to navigate these years away from Memorial Auditorium, but to continue growing, experimenting, and finding new ways to make orchestral music meaningful and relevant in our community.

As we enter another season away from Memorial, we will soon move into the more intimate setting of Akin Auditorium. I am excited about what that change can bring. A smaller space gives us an opportunity to explore new repertoire, new ways of listening, and an even closer connection between musicians and audience. It is another chapter in the story we are building together.

And, of course, I look forward to the day when we can welcome you — and our orchestra — back to Memorial Auditorium. After these seasons of adapting, experimenting, and making music in new places, returning home will carry a special meaning.

Until then, there is still so much music ahead.

Sincerely,



Fouad Fakhouri
Music Director



ENRICH.
EDUCATE.
ENTERTAIN.

OUR MISSION IN ACTION

To promote symphonic music in order to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences in the Texoma community.

During the 2025-26 season, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra brought its mission to life both on and beyond the concert stage. Through community partnerships, music education, and performances in a variety of venues, WFSO created opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with live music. From welcoming first-time listeners to supporting young musicians and creating shared experiences for longtime audiences, the season reflected WFSO's commitment to making symphonic music a meaningful part of life in the Texoma community.



ENRICHING LIVES.

The WFSO deepened its presence across the community during the 2025–26 season, bringing live music into unexpected spaces and forging new partnerships that expanded what a night with the symphony can look like.

Free pop-up concerts brought live music directly to Wichita Falls audiences, including three performances at the downtown Art Walk events. One standout evening gave the community a choice: enjoy a jazz trio at Wichita Falls Brewing Company or a classical duet at Hook & Ladder Wine Bar — two venues in one night, and two distinct ways to experience live music.

A highlight of the season was the return of *Estrellas y Sinfónicas*, the WFSO's collaborative concert with Con Potencia and Zavala International Dance honoring arts and culture during Hispanic Heritage Month. This year's program featured professional Mariachi Alegre DFW who proved to be incredible musicians and entertainers, getting the crowd on their feet and dancing throughout the evening.

The WFSO also joined forces with the Arts Council of Wichita Falls for *A Regency Affair*, a Bridgerton-themed Valentine's Day fundraiser featuring a live string quartet and an art heist performed by local actors. The evening was a playful, memorable celebration of the arts that drew together fans of both organizations.

The Continuo Circle, WFSO's young professionals group, enjoyed two standout experiences this season. Members gathered at Fox Hill for "Spirits & Symphonies," a drink-pairing event led by WFSO musician and MSU Music professor Matthew Luttrell that connected music from the season with carefully chosen cocktail pairings. They also received an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the organ symphony concert — hearing Saint-Saëns' famous organ melodies up close.









EDUCATING MINDS.

Education remained central to the WFSO's mission, reaching students, teachers, and lifelong learners across the region.

Through the Artist-in-Residence program, the WFSO dedicated over 600 hours inside WFISD classrooms, embedding professional musicians directly into school orchestra programs. Working alongside directors, WFSO artists strengthened instruction and invested in both educators and young performers.

MSU music students had the chance to work directly with guest composers Gala Flagello and Catherine McMichael through composition masterclasses, receiving mentorship from a professional artist and bringing their work into conversation with new perspectives.

The WFSO continued its partnership with the Youth Symphony Orchestra (YSO), inviting four young musicians to join the stage during our spring concert programs.

The Young People's Concert was cancelled this season due to the ice storm that swept through Wichita Falls in late January 2026 — but the disruption opened a door. In collaboration with local fine arts administrators, the WFSO reevaluated the program's schedule. Beginning in the 2026-27 season, the Young People's Concert will take place in the fall semester, expanding access and encouraging students before they select fine arts electives for the following school year.

Adult audiences stayed connected throughout the season. Two free Lunch & Learn events offered in-depth looks at upcoming performances. The new "Coffee with the Conductor" video series featured Music Director Fouad Fakhouri sharing insights about the season's repertoire over a cappucino. The Behind the Music podcast, along with KCCU's pre-concert radio programming, brought the music to listeners beyond the concert hall.

Also new this year, a regular email newsletter gave subscribers a casual, behind-the-scenes look at the music and people shaping each program.









ENTERTAINING AUDIENCES.

The WFSO's second season away from Memorial Auditorium brought the orchestra back to familiar alternate venues with something new: a season identity all its own. *Symphonic Tapestries* became a way of weaving together the music we experienced, the places where we gathered, and the people who made each concert possible. This season's theme set the tone for five concert programs, bringing together iconic movie scores, world premieres, holiday favorites, and sweeping orchestral drama.

The Women Pioneers Commissioning Project addressed an important need in the classical music field: creating greater opportunities for new music by women composers to be heard and performed. Through the project, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra successfully premiered two newly commissioned works by female composers, expanding the orchestra's repertoire while bringing new voices to our audiences.

Throughout the season, the WFSO found ways to open the doors wider — welcoming educators, military families, and first-time concertgoers alongside longtime subscribers. Performances were shaped not just by the music on the page, but by the individuals in the seats.

Read on for a closer look at each concert of the 2025–26 season.



WOMEN PIONEERS COMMISSIONING PROJECT









HOLLYWOOD HITS| OCTOBER 18, 2025

The season opened with some of the most recognizable scores ever written — John Williams' Star Wars and Harry Potter, the James Bond theme, Beauty and the Beast, and more. Over 100 local teachers attended free of charge, filling the room with an audience that knew every note from the movies they love.

This was such an amazing concert! Such wonderful energy and the selection of music was so energetic and engaging.I can't believe that our town has such an awesome orchestra!!



SOUNDS OF THE SEASON | DECEMBER 13, 2025

Sounds of the Season sold out for an evening of holiday favorites with a memorable twist. Community member Beth Hamilton took the podium to conduct the full orchestra in *Sleigh Ride.*

"Fun, was the word that summed up my feelings about this concert. I love the thinking outside the common symphony box these last several years. I enjoy the intertwining of older and newer works along with visuals, narrations, other Arts added to the experience."



WOVEN IN SONG | JANUARY 31, 2026

Woven in Song celebrated the winners of the William Gammon Henry Concerto Competition: soprano Xiaojing Luo and tenor Cecil Garrison. Alongside Rossini's *Overture from La gazza ladra* and the world premiere of Catherine McMichael's *Blue Continent,* a new work inspired by the landscapes of Antarctica, the program used live narration to guide audiences through the experience. Over 350 airmen in training and officers from Sheppard AFB attended free of charge.



SAINT-SAËNS: ORGAN SYMPHONY | MARCH 7, 2026

First United Methodist Church was the right room for this one — and the only one with the right instrument. Guest organist Bradley Welch joined the WFSO for Saint-Saëns' *Symphony No. 3*, filling the sanctuary with the full power of the pipe organ alongside the full orchestra. The evening also featured a world premiere from Gala Flagello titled *Athena*, and a quirky double oboe concerto.

"I really enjoyed the new and newer works combined with the Saint-Saens. The orchestra, especially the soloists, sounded great. What an amazing experience to hear this music with the magnificent organ. It was a concert experience I'll never forget."



MUSIC FROM THE NEW WORLD | APRIL 25, 2026

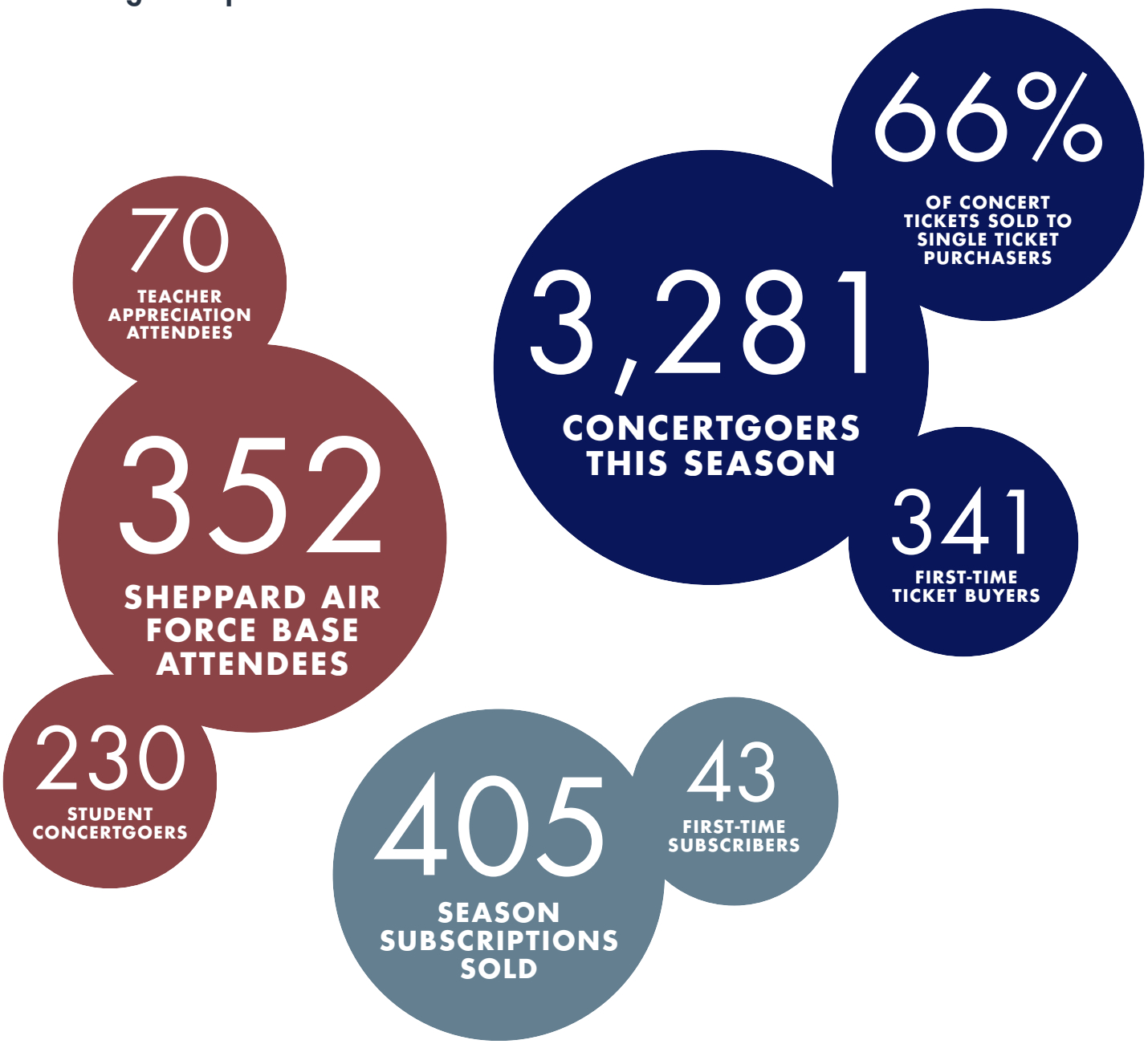
The season closed with a program that moved from Mendelssohn's *"Trumpet" Overture* and Ravel's elegance through GRAMMY-nominated composer Anna Clyne's *Restless Oceans* before landing on Dvořák's beloved *New World Symphony* — accompanied by a tribute to longtime Wichita Falls resident Frank Yeager, whose Yellowstone nature photography was projected alongside the music, giving the performance a breathtaking visual dimension and a meaningful way to remember a cherished member of our community.

OUR AUDIENCE IN 2025-26

The 2025–26 season marked a turning point for WFSO's audience. Season subscriptions climbed, first-time ticket buyers remained strong, and the orchestra expanded its reach into new communities through partnerships with Sheppard Air Force Base, a dedicated teacher appreciation concert night, and increased student attendance at live concerts.

For the first time, single-ticket buyers made up the majority of concert attendance, with 66% of tickets sold to first-time and casual concertgoers, up from 42% the previous season. This shift reflects the impact of intentional outreach, creative programming designed to attract new listeners, and the addition of a full-time marketing professional dedicated to audience development. At the same time, season subscriptions grew — a sign that once audiences find the WFSO, they come back.

Together, these results reflect an audience that is both deepening in loyalty and broadening in scope.



WFSO'S 2025-26 ECONOMIC IMPACT IN WICHITA FALLS

Based on actual FY25 expenditures of $876,745 and attendance of 3,281 people across all concerts and programs, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra generated meaningful economic impact during the 2025–26 season. In the Wichita County region of approximately 129,500 residents, WFSO's concerts and programs support local jobs, small businesses, and tax revenue which extends the orchestra's impact well beyond the stage.

In FY2025-26, WFSO generated an estimated $1.5 million in total economic activity across the Texoma region.



BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Direct Organizational Spending = $876,745
Investment in professional musicians, artistic leadership, administrative staff, venues, production, education initiatives, and outreach programs — supporting both local and visiting artists and a wide range of regional service providers.

Audience-Driven Local Spending ≈ $98,430
Estimated event-related spending by concertgoers on dining, beverages, parking, childcare, and retail purchases in Wichita Falls and surrounding communities.

Jobs Supported ≈ 14 full-time equivalent jobs
The WFSO's staffing including full-time and part-time staff, contracted musicians and professionals, and additional employment supported through vendor partnerships and indirect economic activity.

Local & State Tax Revenue ≈ $45,000
Generated through WFSO operations and audience spending at area restaurants, shops, hotels, and service businesses.

These results highlight the importance of investing in local arts organizations like the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra — not only for their cultural contributions, but for their role as steady, long-term contributors to the economic health and vitality of the Texoma region.

Economic impact estimates are based on WFSO's FY 2025–26 operating expenses, attendance of 3,281 people across all concerts and programs, a moderate event-related spending average of $30 per person (below national AEP6 averages), and standard economic multipliers derived from Americans for the Arts' Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study for similarly sized communities.



DONOR IMPACT

This season, 192 donors raised $214,479 toward the 2025 Annual Fund — exceeding the $200,000 goal and setting a new high-water mark for individual giving in the last decade.

192 donors made that possible this year, including 49 who gave for the very first time. Their generosity kept performances, education programs, and community initiatives running — and gave the orchestra the flexibility to pursue new partnerships and respond to the unexpected.

This kind of support does more than fund a season. It reflects a community's ongoing belief in what live symphonic music can do — and it's what allows the WFSO to keep showing up, year after year.

About the Annual Fund

The Annual Fund is the WFSO's yearly campaign for unrestricted individual support — and the single largest source of individual giving each season. Because ticket sales cover only about 20% of what it costs to bring a full orchestra to the stage, Annual Fund gifts are what make the rest of the season possible. Contributions made during the calendar year go directly toward planning and funding the upcoming season, giving the WFSO the stability to commit to artists, programs, and community initiatives well before the first note is played.

**The 2025 Annual Fund represents gifts received between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025 that fund the operations of the 2025-2026 season.*

YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION

Every gift, at every level, helps bring symphonic music to life by supporting the musicians, programs, and experiences that make live music accessible across the Texoma community.

$100	$500	$1000	$5000
FUNDS ONE DAY OF ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE INSTRUCTION IN A LOCAL SCHOOL	SUPPORTS A WORKSHOP OR MASTERCLASS FOR HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC STUDENTS	COVERS GUEST ARTIST TRAVEL AND LODGING TO WICHITA FALLS	UNDERWRITES HALL RENTAL AND PRODUCTION FOR A POPS CONCERT

"A community our size has a responsibility to provide cultural opportunities that smaller towns and cities can't. Symphonic music is one of those cultural opportunities. Dance and theatre go hand in hand with symphonic music. It's not easy to pay for these community assets but it's necessary and it's what we do here in Wichita Falls. I am happy to support the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra and look forward to every performance. Many of the artists are also educators so that makes me proud to keep the arts alive through our orchestra artists."

- David Farabee, WFSO Donor



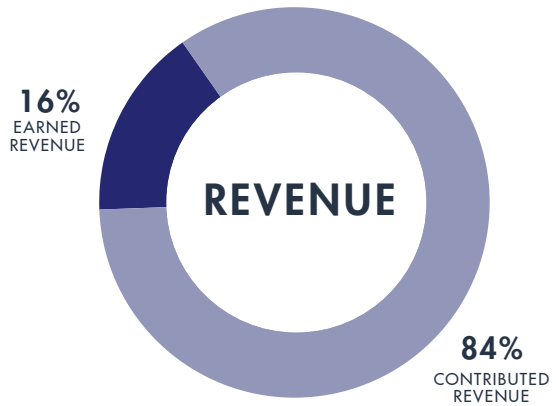
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW
FY25-26 (JUNE 1, 2025 – MAY 31, 2026)

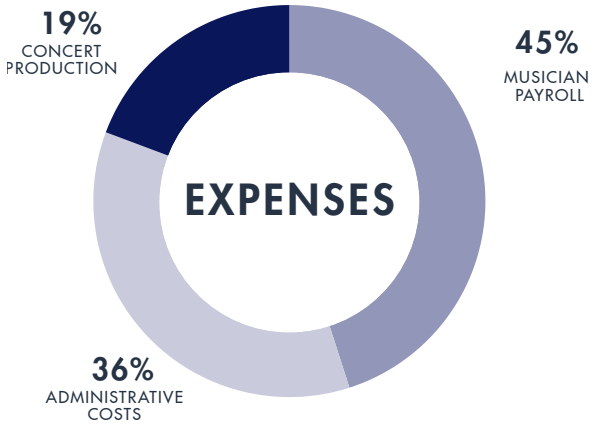
The Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra remains committed to responsible financial stewardship, transparency, and long-term sustainability.

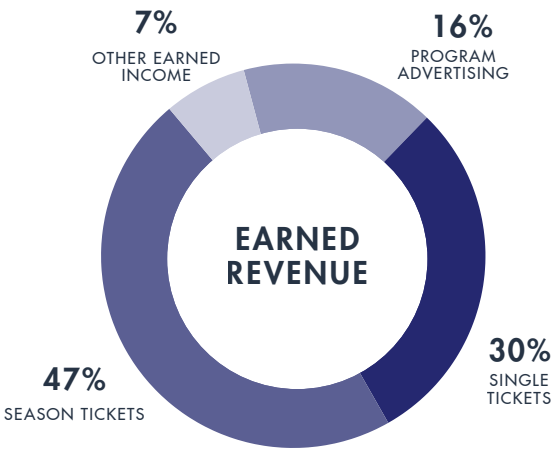
During the 2025–26 fiscal year, the WFSO operated with total expenses of **just under $867,000**, supporting professional musicians, educational programming, community outreach, and essential operational needs. Contributions from donors, along with ticket revenue, grants, and sponsorships, were carefully allocated to advance the orchestra's mission while maintaining fiscal discipline.

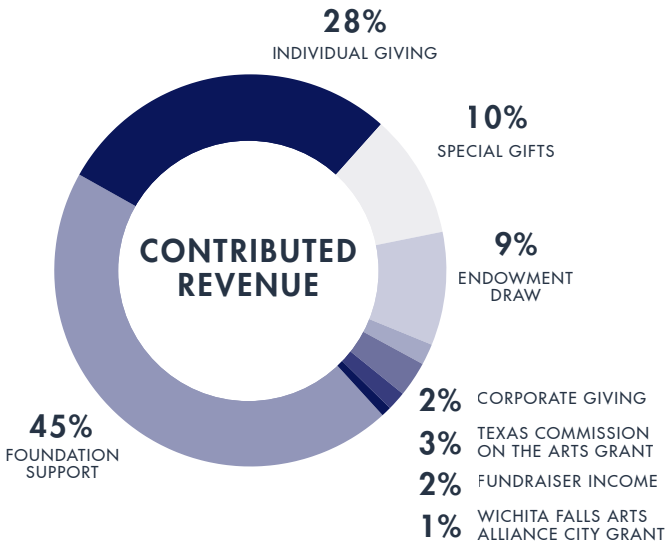
The non-profit organization continues to balance artistic ambition with financial responsibility: prioritizing mission-driven programming, investing in education and access initiatives, and managing resources prudently during a period of venue transition and audience growth.

Detailed financial information is presented here to provide clarity and accountability, reflecting the trust placed in the WFSO by its supporters and community.









As revenue streams continue to evolve, **expanding individual philanthropy and local corporate sponsorships** is a key strategy in building a balanced and sustainable funding model: one that supports both current operations and future growth.



GROWING OUR REACH

The 2025–26 season set a strong foundation, and the WFSO is building on it. As we continue the 2026–27 fiscal year, several new initiatives are already underway — expanding how the orchestra serves students, engages the broader community, and plans for its future.

IN EDUCATION

- *Picture the Music* brings Region 9 elementary students into a cross-curricular arts experience centered on Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Students explore the piece in music class, then use expressive visual art techniques to put what they hear onto paper. Their artwork will be displayed at the opening concert, and the students will be invited to attend for free to see it.
- *The Instrument Petting Zoo* returns to WFISD elementary schools, giving young students hands-on time with orchestral instruments.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- *Prelude: Gershwin* is an all-new happy hour event featuring guest pianist Kevin Cole, giving auttendees an intimate and casual preview of *Rhapsody in Blue* ahead of the full concert.
- *Check Out the Symphony* is a new ticket program in collaboration with the Wichita Falls Public Library, making it easier than ever for community members to access live symphony performances.
- A free community drum circle, hosted in collaboration with MSU Texas during January's Stampede Week, will open the door to new audiences and celebrate the connection between music and campus life.

LOOKING AHEAD

The WFSO Board of Directors has approved a strategic plan for 2026–2030, setting a clear direction for the organization in the years ahead. The plan also lays the groundwork for the orchestra's return to Memorial Auditorium in the 2027–28 season.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2030

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE	Elevate the WFSO's artistic excellence through a strong orchestra roster, thoughtfully balanced programming of beloved works and new music, and finding new ways of connecting audiences with the music through experiential concert elements.
BOARD & GOVERNANCE	Build a stronger foundation for WFSO's future through intentional leadership succession, strategic Board recruitment, continued investment in professional development, and greater accountability structures.
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT	Grow and diversify the WFSO audience by creating new pathways into the orchestra, expanding community partnerships, and developing concert experiences that give more people reasons to connect with live symphonic music.
FINANCIAL HEALTH	Build greater financial stability and capacity through intentional fundraising strategies, expanded business support, continued financial planning, and investment in the resources needed to sustain the organization.
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY	Expand WFSO's role as a catalyst for music education in the region by developing new learning opportunities, strengthening support for educators and young musicians, and deepening partnerships across the community.

As this report reflects, the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra continues to build on a strong foundation of artistic excellence and meaningful community connection. As we look ahead, our focus remains on expanding access to live music, deepening engagement, and creating new opportunities for the orchestra to serve and connect with the Texoma community.

This work is made possible by the generosity and trust of our supporters. To our donors, sponsors, volunteers, musicians, and audiences: thank you for being part of the WFSO and for helping keep live symphonic music a vibrant and accessible part of life in Texoma.

If you have questions or comments about this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to Alicia Deges, Executive Director at wfsoed@wfso.org

Thank you TO OUR 2025-26 SEASON SPONSORS

THE PRIDDY FOUNDATION

PERKINS-PROTHRO FOUNDATION

WFACF- Aurora S. Bolin Memorial Endowment
Fain Foundation
J.S. Bridwell Foundation
Bryant Edwards Foundation
Conley Foundation
The McCoy Foundation
Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation
The REA Charitable Trust

AIR TRACTOR

Texas Commission on the Arts
Investing in a Creative Texas

Market STREET

ANTHONY INMAN CONSTRUCTION, INC.

WFA THE ALLIANCE

Wichita Falls TEXAS
Blue Skies. Golden Opportunities.



