



ICO Awards Program
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Awards History of the Illinois Council of Orchestras

Orchestra of the Year (Professional, 2001 to present) (Separate awards for professional and community orchestras began in 2000)

- 2026 Chicago Philharmonic
- 2025 Elgin Symphony Orchestra
- 2024 No award
- 2023 Chicago Jazz Philharmonic
- 2022 Quad City Symphony Orchestra
- 2021 Music of the Baroque
- 2020 Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
- 2019 Lake Forest Symphony
- 2018 Chicago Philharmonic
- 2017 New Philharmonic
- 2016 Elgin Symphony Orchestra
- 2015 Quad City Symphony Orchestra
- 2014 Chicago Arts Orchestra
- 2013 Peoria Symphony Orchestra
- 2012 No award
- 2011 Heartland Festival Orchestra
- 2010 Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
- 2009 New Philharmonic
- 2008 Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra
- 2007 Rockford Symphony Orchestra
- 2006 Lake Forest Symphony
- 2005 Elgin Symphony Orchestra
- 2004 No award
- 2003 Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra
- 2002 Symphony II (now known as Chicago Philharmonic)
- 2001 Grant Park Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
- 2000 Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
- 1999 Elgin Symphony Orchestra
- 1998 Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
- 1997 Northbrook Symphony Orchestra
- 1996 Evanston Symphony Orchestra
- 1995 Music of the Baroque
- 1994 Lake Forest Symphony
- 1993 Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
- 1992 Rockford Symphony Orchestra
- 1991 Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
- 1990 Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO Centennial Year)
- 1989 Chicago Chamber Orchestra
- 1988 Elgin Symphony Orchestra
- 1987 Peoria Symphony Orchestra
- 1986 Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra

1985 Springfield Symphony Orchestra
 1984 Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
 1983 Springfield Symphony Orchestra
 1982 Danville Symphony Orchestra
 1981 Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra
 1980 Belleville Philharmonic Society

Community Orchestra of the Year (Community, 2000 to present) (Separate awards for professional and community orchestras began in 2000)

2026 Lake Forest Civic Orchestra
 2025 Lakeview Orchestra
 2024 Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2023 Chicago Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
 2022 Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra
 2021 DuPage Symphony Orchestra
 2020 Quincy Symphony Orchestra
 2019 Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra
 2018 The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
 2017 Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2016 Lakeview Orchestra
 2015 Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
 2014 No award
 2013 DuPage Symphony Orchestra
 2012 Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra
 2011 The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
 2010 Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2009 Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra
 2008 Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
 2007 DuPage Symphony Orchestra
 2006 Northbrook Symphony Orchestra
 2005 Northwest Symphony Orchestra
 2004 The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
 2003 Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2002 Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra
 2001 Southern Illinois Symphony Orchestra
 2000 North Shore Chamber Orchestra

Youth Orchestra of the Year

2026 Encore Music Academy Youth Orchestra
 2025 Midwest Philharmonic Orchestra
 2024 Quad City Symphony Orchestra
 2023 No award
 2022 Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
 2021 Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
 2020 No award
 2019 Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
 2018 Rockford Symphony Youth Orchestra
 2017 No award
 2016 Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
 2015 No award
 2014 No award
 2013 No award
 2012 No award
 2011 McHenry County Youth Orchestras
 2010 Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras

2009	Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
2008	Schaumburg Youth Orchestra
2007	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
2006	West Suburban Youth Orchestra
2005	No award
2004	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2003	Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
2002	Metropolis Youth Symphony
2001	Schaumburg Youth Orchestra
2000	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
1999	East Central Illinois Youth Orchestra
1998	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
1997	Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
1996	No award
1995	McHenry County Youth Orchestra

Chamber Ensemble of the Year

2026	No award
2025	Artemis Chamber Orchestra
2024	No award
2023	No award
2022	No award
2021	No award
2020	No award
2019	No award
2018	No award
2017	No award
2016	No award
2015	No award
2014	No award
2013	No award
2012	No award
2011	Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra
2010	No award
2009	No award (please refer to “Special Awards” below)
2008	No award
2007	Chicago Chamber Musicians
2006	No award
2005	Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
2004	Salt Creek Sinfonietta
2003	No award
2002	Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana
2001	Zion Chamber Orchestra
2000	Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra
1999	Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
1998	The Prairie Ensemble
1997	McHenry County Youth Orchestra
1996	No award
1995	Woodstock Mozart Festival

Conductor of the Year (Professional and Community/Small Orchestra categories since 2004)

2026	Stilian Kirov, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (professional)
2026	Gregory Hughes, Lakeview Orchestra, (community Orchestra)
2025	Chad Goodman, Elgin Symphony Orchestra (professional)

- 2025 Russell Vinick, Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2024 David L. Crane, Southwest Symphony Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2024 Daniella Valdez, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (youth orchestra)
- 2024 No award (professional orchestra)
- 2023 Orbert Davis, Chicago Jazz Philharmonic
- 2022 Stephen Alltop, Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
- 2022 Matthew Sheppard, Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
- 2021 Scott Speck, Chicago Philharmonic (professional orchestra)
- 2021 Taka Matsunaga, Midwest Philharmonic Orchestra (community/small orchestra)
- 2020 No award (professional orchestra)
- 2020 No award (community/small orchestra)
- 2019 Vladimir Kulenovic, Lake Forest Symphony (professional orchestra)
- 2019 Allen Tinkham, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras (youth orchestra)
- 2018 Kirk Muspratt, New Philharmonic (professional orchestra)
- 2018 No award (community orchestra)
- 2017 Jay Friedman, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest (community orchestra)
- 2017 No award (professional orchestra)
- 2016 Gregory Hughes, Lakeview Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2016 Steven Larsen, Rockford Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2015 Russell Vinick, Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2015 Andrew Grams, Elgin Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2014 Lawrence Eckerling, Evanston Symphony Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2014 Joseph Malmquist, Schaumburg Youth Orchestra (youth orchestra)
- 2013 Bruce Briney, Quincy Symphony Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2013 No award (professional orchestra)
- 2012 Alan Heatherington, Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra and Lake Forest Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2012 Stephen Alltop, Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra (community orchestra)
- 2011 David Commanday, Heartland Festival Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2011 Jay Kenneth Friedman, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest (community orchestra)
- 2010 Russell Vinick, Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra)
- 2010 Bruce Polay, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2009 Robert Hanson, Elgin Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2009 Linc Smelser, Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra category)
- 2008 Randal Swiggum, Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra)
- 2007 Lawrence Eckerling, Evanston Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra)
- 2006 Steven Larsen, Rockford Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2006 Paul Vermel, Northwest Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra)
- 2005 Alan Heatherington, Lake Forest Symphony and Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra (professional orchestra)
- 2005 Edward Benyas, Chicago Chamber Orchestra and Southern Illinois Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra)
- 2004 Harold Bauer, New Philharmonic (professional orchestra)
- 2004 Bruce Polay, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra (small orchestra)
- 2003 Barbara Schubert, DuPage Symphony Orchestra
- 2002 Edgar Muenzer, Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
- 2001 Robert Hanson, Elgin Symphony Orchestra, and
Allan Dennis, Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
- 2000 Jay Friedman, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
- 1999 Steven Larsen, Rockford Symphony Orchestra
- 1998 Samuel Magad, Northbrook Symphony Orchestra
- 1997 Bruce Polay, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
- 1996 No award
- 1995 Carmon DeLeone, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra

College/University Conductor of the Year

2026	No award
2025	No award
2024	No award
2023	No award
2022	No award
2021	Emanuele Andrizzi, Roosevelt University
2020	No award
2019	No award
2018	No award
2017	No award
2016	No award
2015	No award
2014	No award
2013	Donald Schleicher, Music Director & Conductor University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra
2012	No award
2011	Michael Luxner, Music Director & Conductor Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra

Board President/Chair of the Year

2026	No award
2025	Lindsay Brown, Lakeview Orchestra
2024	Margaret Gergen, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
2023	Thomas O. Kuhns, Music of the Baroque
2022	No award
2021	No award
2020	David Leehey, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
2019	Ann Tucker, Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra
2018	Vince P. Flood, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
2017	Jim Kidder, Heartland Festival Orchestra
2016	No award
2015	Thomas Sharp, Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
2014	No award
2013	David J. Leehey, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
2012	Kip Pope, Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2011	No award
2010	John Schladweiler, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2009	Penelope Sachs, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
2008	No award
2007	Diane Macewicz, Northwest Symphony Orchestra
2006	Louise Sullivan, Elgin Symphony Orchestra
2005	Robert B. Clark, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2004	Kelly Brest van Kempen, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
2003	Gene Bahls, Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra
2002	John Totten, Elgin Symphony Orchestra

Executive Director or General Manager of the Year

2026	Tim Corpus, Hyde Park Youth Symphony
2025	Schaumburg Youth Orchestra
2024	No award

2023 No award
 2022 Christina Salerno, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
 2021 Declan McGovern, Music of the Baroque
 2020 Donna Milanovich, Chicago Philharmonic
 2019 No award
 2018 Beth Hoover, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
 2017 Lucas D. Wood, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
 2016 Laura Evancho, Heartland Festival Orchestra
 2015 No award
 2014 Susan Lape, Lake Forest Symphony Association
 2013 Jeffrey Farlow-Cornell, Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
 2012 David Ellis, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2011 No award
 2010 No award
 2009 Brian Ritter, Rockford Symphony Orchestra
 2008 Jane Polett, Quincy Symphony Orchestra
 2007 Pearl Strickland, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
 2006 Michael Pastreich, Elgin Symphony Orchestra
 2005 No award
 2004 Beth Hoover Gavriel, The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
 2003 Justine Burlson, Senior Suburban Orchestra
 2002 No award
 2001 Lynn Klingler, Classical Symphony Orchestra
 2000 Pearl Strickland, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
 1999 J. C. Wacholz, Northbrook Symphony Orchestra
 1998 Jeannette Kreston, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
 1997 Kevin Hagen, Illinois Symphony Orchestra

Volunteer of the Year

2026 Kathryn Macal, West Suburban Symphony Society
 2025 Cheryl Flinn, Symphony of Oak Park and River Forest
 2024 Alexandra Newman, Lakeview Orchestra
 2023 Kathy Huff, The Hyde Park Youth Symphony
 2022 No award
 2021 Marjorie Stinespring, Music of the Baroque
 2020 Anthony Riani, Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
 2019 Cheryl Flinn, The Symphony of Oak Park and River Forest
 2018 Karen Hoag, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
 2017 Sterling (Stu) Ainsworth, Elgin Symphony Orchestra
 2016 Taylor Scott, Lakeview Orchestra
 2015 Sarah Flax, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2014 Richard & Dorothy DuSold, Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
 2013 David Moller, Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
 2012 Kenneth Bade, Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra
 2011 No award
 2010 No award
 2009 Joyce McFarland Dlugopolski, Elgin Symphony Orchestra
 2008 Walter Wolodkin, Northwest Symphony Orchestra
 2007 No award
 2006 Julie Westbrook, Evanston Symphony Orchestra
 2005 Gilbert R. Demange, Salt Creek Sinfonietta
 2004 Rita Gentry, Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
 2003 William Simpson, Illinois Symphony Orchestra
 2002 James Bataille, Northwest Symphony Orchestra

2001	Paul Keser, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2000	Barbara Bowermaster, Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra
1999	Barbara Lukancic, Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra
1998	Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
1997	John Hayes, Illinois Symphony Orchestra
1996	No award
1995	No award
1994	Ray Pensinger and Elizabeth Wester, Woodstock Mozart Festival
1993	No award
1992	No award
1991	No award
1990	Edward and Pearl Brody, Elgin Symphony Orchestra, and Lorene Dettlehouser, Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra

Guild of the Year

2026	Midwest Young Artist Conservatory Building Committee
2025	Illinois Symphony Orchestra Guild
2024	No award
2023	No award
2022	Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2021	No award
2020	No award
2019	No award
2018	No award
2017	No award
2016	Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
2015	No award
2014	No award
2013	The Guild of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2012	Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra Associates
2011	Lake Forest Symphony Association
2010	No award
2009	Midwest Young Artists Parent Volunteer Organization
2008	The Guild of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2007	Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra Women's Board
2006	Lake Forest Symphony Association
2005	No award
2004	No award
2003	No award
2002	No award
2001	No award
2000	No award
1999	Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra Guild
1998	Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra Guild (Frank Beaman)
1997	Danville Symphony Orchestra Guild

Contributor of the Year (discontinued)

2001	Ralph Bowermaster, Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra; and Wells Fargo Bank and Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2000	Maytag Corporation, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
1999	Granger Cook, Lake Forest Symphony
1998	Kraft Foods, Inc., Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
1997	First Chicago Bank of Park Ridge, Park Ridge Civic Orchestra

1996	No award
1995	Maytag Corporation, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
1994	Richard and Roseann Noel, Sinfonia da Camera
1993	No award
1992	No award
1991	Maytag Corporation, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
1991	Mitchell Brothers Realty, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

Programming of the Year

2026	Evanston Symphony Orchestra
2025	Chicago Philharmonic
2024	Lakeview Orchestra
2023	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2022	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
2021	Waukegan Symphony Orchestra
2020	New Philharmonic
2019	Chicago Philharmonic
2018	Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra
2017	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2016	No award
2015	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
2014	No award
2013	Northbrook Symphony Orchestra
2012	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2011	Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra
2010	Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra
2009	No award
2008	Rockford Symphony Orchestra
2007	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2006	Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2005	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
2004	The Prairie Ensemble
2003	Northwest Symphony Orchestra
2002	No award
2001	Metropolis Youth Symphony
2000	Northbrook Symphony Orchestra
1999	The Prairie Ensemble
1998	The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
1997	Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra
1996	Elgin Symphony Orchestra

Education Program of the Year

2024	EMA Youth Orchestra
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Community Relations of the Year

2026	No award
2025	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
2024	No award
2023	Quad City Symphony Orchestra
2022	No award
2021	The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
2020	Evanston Symphony Orchestra

2019	Chicago Philharmonic
2018	Senior Suburban Orchestra
2017	Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra
2016	No award
2015	Heartland Festival Orchestra
2014	Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2013	Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2012	Senior Suburban Orchestra
2011	Quincy Symphony Orchestra
2010	Illinois Symphony Orchestra
2009	Southwest Symphony Orchestra
2008	No award
2007	Evanston Symphony Orchestra
2006	Senior Suburban Orchestra
2005	Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra
2004	Illinois Symphony Orchestra
2003	Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2002	The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
2001	Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2000	Lake Forest Symphony
1999	Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
1998	McHenry County Youth Orchestra, and Evanston Symphony Orchestra
1997	Park Ridge Civic Orchestra

Musician of the Year (New category introduced in 2026)

2026	Richard Zili, Lakeview Orchestra
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Season Brochure of the Year (discontinued)

2002	Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2001	Rockford Symphony Orchestra
2000	Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
1999	Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
1998	No award
1997	Lake Forest Symphony
1996	No award
1995	Elgin Symphony Orchestra

Marketing Program of the Year (discontinued)

2000	Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra
1999	Music Institute of Chicago
1998	Evanston Symphony Orchestra
1997	Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
1996	Evanston Symphony Orchestra

Cultural Leadership Award

2026	No award
2025	No award
2024	Greg Clemons
2023	Terrance Malone Gray, Associate Conductor Emeritus, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2022	No award
2021	No award
2020	Allen Dennis, Founder & Director, Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
2019	No award
2018	Jay Friedman, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
2017	No award
2016	No award
2015	No award
2014	No award
2013	No award
2012	No award
2011	Dieter Kober, Chicago Chamber Orchestra
2010	Alan Heatherington, Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra and the Lake Forest Symphony
2009	No award
2008	Bruce Polay, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2007	Walfrid Kujala, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (retired)
2006	No award
2005	No award
2004	Robert Hanson, Elgin Symphony Orchestra
2003	Jeanette Kreston, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras

Special Awards

2021	Honorable Mention, Volunteer of the Year Mary Moutvic, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra Awarded posthumously.
2016	Certificate of Recognition Brian Groner, Music Director, Harper Symphony Orchestra
2015	Certificate of Recognition 100 th Anniversary of the Quad City Symphony Orchestra
2015	Certificate of Recognition 60 th Anniversary of the DuPage Symphony Orchestra
2014	Certificate of Recognition Edgar Muenzer, Park Ridge Civic Orchestra
2013	Honorable Mention, General Manager of the Year Amanda Nelson, Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra
2012	Honorable Mention, Volunteer of the Year Helen Jahn, Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra
2011	Honorable Mention, Conductor of the Year Terrance Oliveras Gray, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
2010	Arts Leadership Award Chicago Symphony Orchestra
2009	Honorable Mention, Volunteer of the Year Robert Clark, Knox-Galesburg Symphony Orchestra
2009	Honorable Mention, Chamber Orchestra of the Year FullScore Chamber Orchestra
2008	Honorable Mention, Youth Orchestra of the Year Merit School of Music
2007	Special Recognition in Chamber Music Merit School of Music
2002	Festival Events of the Year Zion Chamber Orchestra Outreach Program of the Year Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra
2001	Festival Events of the Year Salt Creek Sinfonietta
1999	Special Events of the Year The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
1998	Festival Events of the Year Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, Northwestern University

Lifetime Achievement Award (Discontinued)

2002 Dieter Kober, Chicago Chamber Orchestra, 50th Year Anniversary
Frank York, Park Ridge Fine Arts Symphony
Harvey Treger, North Shore Chamber Orchestra

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