

ACSO Webinar

## **Boards and Belonging: Building and Sustaining Healthy Orchestra Boards Through a Lens of Inclusion**

Part 1: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 | 11:30-1 PM PT

Part 2: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 | 11:30-1 PM PT

### **About Jessica Schmidt:**

As an arts administrator and consultant, Jessica holds special interest in amplifying the power of arts and culture to catalyze positive social change, connect individuals across a wide array of lived experiences, and draw focus to the existing strengths of communities. She supports arts and culture organizations in their exploration, understanding, strategy development and implementation of “DEI” (diversity, equity and inclusion) access, belonging and/or justice work. Jessica is passionate about building individual and organizational capacity to recognize and utilize power and advantage to reimagine the way arts organizations exist.

From 2012-2017, Jessica served as Director of Education and Community Engagement at the Boston Symphony Orchestra, providing internal and external leadership for BSO education and community engagement programs. Since January of 2016, she has offered consulting services via *Orchestrate Inclusion* ([orchestrateinclusion.com](http://orchestrateinclusion.com)), serving as an external partner to orchestras and other performing arts organizations as they create and implement strategies toward greater diversity, equity and inclusion within their organizations. Jessica served for three years as Senior Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisor to the League of American Orchestras. Her consulting and workshop clients have included the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Chamber Choir, Columbia Gorge Orchestra, Grant Park Music Festival, Illinois Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Lexington Philharmonic, National Repertory Orchestra, New England Conservatory, New Jersey Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque, and Princeton Symphony. Jessica has served as a speaker/presenter for conferences including the Association of British Orchestras, International Conference of Symphony Orchestra Musicians (ICSOM), League of American Orchestras and Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA).

Prior to arriving in Boston, Jessica was the Senior Director of Community Programs at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the Education Coordinator at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Jessica received an MA in Arts Administration and an MBA from Southern Methodist University and completed her undergraduate education at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN where she studied horn performance and political science. She is a graduate of the 2015 LeadBoston Program, an executive leadership program focused on social responsibility administered by the YWCA Boston and has completed the Interaction Institute for Social Change’s *Fundamentals of Facilitation for Racial Justice Work* training and Racial Equity Institute’s Phase 1 Workshop. Jessica is a trained Mediator and completed forty-hours of mediation training in 2020 in accordance with M.G.L. ch.233 § 23C with MWI in Boston and is active in the recently formed national Deep Equity Practitioners Network (DEPN).