

Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras
Usher Handbook
2026–2027 SEASON



W I C H I T A
S Y M P H O N Y
Y O U T H
O R C H E S T R A S

WICHITA SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS USHER **HANDBOOK 2026–2027 SEASON**

Welcome to the WSYO Usher Program! This handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and key information needed to ensure a smooth and successful ushering experience. All ushers are expected to read this guide before their first performance of the season. It will serve as your go-to reference throughout the year.

Our patrons are the heart of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. From the moment they arrive to the moment they leave; every interaction should reflect our commitment to excellence. Providing a welcoming, professional, and enjoyable experience is essential. As an usher, you are often the first, and sometimes only, person a patron interacts with. Your attitude, conduct, and communication shape their entire impression of the Wichita Symphony.

Delivering exceptional customer service means being attentive, friendly, and helpful always. Together, we can create a concert environment that is memorable, magical, and representative of the care we take both on and off stage.

Front of House

Front of House Manager: This person is primarily responsible for all house operations, functions, and activities immediately prior to, during, and immediately after a performance. He or she conducts pre-concert meetings informing the ushers of all pertinent information about the performance and about managing the house. The House Manager also coordinates with the Stage Manager to open the house. The House Manager may deal with patron complaints, ticket problems, double-seating, accidents, falls, and maintenance concerns.

Lead Ushers (red vest): Lead Ushers directly supervise other volunteers, deal with double-seating issues, answer questions, and solve problems. This person is the first and primary contact for ushers to resolve any problems.

Volunteer Ushers (black vest): Ushers are primarily responsible for patron satisfaction, thus making this position one of critical importance. Ushers are the first, and sometimes only contact for patrons. As such, they need to present the most professional image they can. Ushers greet patrons, answer questions, and perform various other assigned duties.

Box Office Staff: Box office personnel are always present before shows until approximately 20 minutes after the performance has begun. They oversee all aspects of the performance dealing with tickets.

Concert Hall Information

The Concert Hall seats approximately 2,200 patrons and was built in 1969. The middle two seats of every row are 1 & 101 with two-digit numbers (28-2) entering on House Left and three-digit numbers (128-102) entering on House Right. The first level features rows C-Z & AA-JJ.

There are two boxes, one on each side of the house, located on the second level which each seat 12 patrons. Box seats are labeled as row KK.

The third level is the balcony which holds rows A-H and follows the same seating rules as the first level. Balcony tickets will specify on their ticket that

Restrooms: Concert Hall Orchestra level restrooms are located in the lobby of the first floor. Women's restrooms are on the inside lobby wall and men's restrooms on the outside lobby wall. Upper level restrooms are located on the second floor. Both levels have accessible restrooms. There are no restrooms in the balcony.

Drinking Fountains: Drinking fountains are located on the inside lobby wall of the main floor next to the concession areas on house left and right, and also on the second floor in the same areas.

Accessible Entrance: The Main Entrances to the Concert Hall have push button doors, however, those in wheelchairs and/or walkers will probably need additional help.

In the event of a Tornado: It has been determined that the safest action in the Concert Hall is for audience members to remain in their seats. However, people in the balcony area should move to the house left or right access hallway and then move inside the main floor Concert Hall area. If no empty seats are available, patrons should stand near the wall. The House left and right ramp entrances on either side of the main seating are not considered safe areas. People in Box Seats should remain there with the doors closed.

In Case of an Emergency: Contact a Century II House Manager or Usher.

Founders' Room: The Founders' Room is located on the second floor on Concert Hall left. Our Patrons who are Super Pass Subscription holders have access to the Founder's Room during intermission.

Elevators: Elevators are located on both left and right sides of the Concert Hall Lobby.

Concessions: Concessions are available before the concert and during intermission and are located on both the left and right sides on the main floor. Concessions are cash-free and only accept credit card payment.

Lost and Found: Found items should be delivered to the House Manager or a Lead Usher as soon as possible with the seat and row they were found in. If items are not picked up, they will be in Century II Offices. Please call (316) 303-8100 for more help.

Hearing Assist Devices: Hearing devices are available at the Hearing Device Table in the lobby. If a patron requests a hearing device, please direct them to the lobby.

Accessible Seating: When a patron is able to sit in a seat, the wheelchair or walker will be kept at a safe convenient place for use during intermission and after the show. Please find an adult usher to take care of this process.

Seating is available on the main floor (rows M and S) and on the second floor in the box areas for those patrons with limited mobility or with special needs. Such seating should be requested when tickets are purchased.

Wheelchairs: If a patron requests a wheelchair, please contact a Lead usher or the Front of House Manager for assistance.

CONCERT HALL POLICIES

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted in any area of the Concert Hall. Patrons are allowed to go outside to a designed smoking section outside the House Left lobby on the main floor. Patrons should be cautioned that they may need to show their tickets to re-enter the Concert Hall.

Cameras, Phones, and Recording Devices: Some symphony events will have hired video, audio, or photographers. Patrons are allowed to take brief video and photographs. Patrons are not allowed to film the entirety of a piece or movement. **Flash photography is prohibited.** If a youth usher notices excessive video or photo being taken, they must find a Lead Usher.

Food and Beverages: Food and beverages will be allowed in the Concert Hall. Alcoholic beverages should not be taken outside of the building before or after the concert, or during intermission. Smokers who want to drink may go to the 2nd Floor outdoor balcony. Typically, the drink is placed against the glass windows inside the Concert Hall near the smoking area so they are responsible for watching their own drink(s).

Tickets: Every patron, regardless of age, must have a ticket to enter the Concert Hall.

Babies and Toddlers: Guests must be 5+ years old to attend WSO events. We recommend patrons with young children purchase seats near the aisle in case a restless child needs to be taken out of the concert hall during the performance. The Wichita Symphony reserves the right to ask any individuals who are disrupting fellow patrons or the concert setting to leave the hall. Please see Lead Ushers for assistance if you become aware of an issue.

Seating Patrons: Every patron should sit in the seat for which he or she is holding a ticket. Only the House Manager or Box Office personnel may relocate a patron. Never place a patron in any seat other than the one for which they hold a ticket without contacting the House Manager. Never encourage a patron to move on his or her own to improve seating location.

Late Seating: Latecomers will be seated at the first opportunity in the program. Patrons are asked to wait quietly in the foyers outside the Concert Hall. Admit latecomers to the Concert Hall in between movements or pieces.

Special Needs Patrons: Please do not treat these patrons any differently than other patrons. No overt or highly visible attention should be given to these patrons without their request for it.

Service Animals: These animals are always allowed in the Concert Hall. There are federal laws protecting the rights of patrons with disabilities and their animals. You have the right to ask if an animal is A.) a service animal and B.) what service it provides. Never touch or speak to a service animal. The animal may lie under the patron's chair, in front of the patron's chair, or to the side of the patron's chair in an aisle.

Assisting Physically Impaired Patrons: We expect most of our patrons who will need assistance with wheelchairs or walkers to have someone with them who will be able to care for them. We always pride ourselves for being caring, accommodating, and helpful to our patrons; however, in today's litigious society, we must try to limit our exposure to helping push wheelchairs. Ask an adult usher if help is needed.

USHER INFORMATION

Important Things to Remember:

- Only authorized staff are allowed to enter the Concert Hall before the "house is open". **Youth Symphony ushers are not to enter the house before it is open under any circumstances.**
- The House Manager will "open the house" when it has been released by the stage manager.
- Patrons must be seated only according to the information on their tickets.
- Patrons may only be relocated by the House Manager or Box Office staff.
- No one is allowed backstage. ONLY authorized staff with credentials may escort someone to the backstage areas.
- Century II is a smoke-free environment (this includes "vapor" devices).
- If a youth usher does not pick up their comp tickets, ushers are permitted to sit to watch a performance in designated areas only if seats are available. All ushers from both WSYO & CII, must sit on the **last two seats of a row, row S and back**. Ushers should not cross over patrons to reach a different seat.
- A positive attitude is a must.
- Be kind, courteous, helpful, and cheerful. Greet patrons with a smile. Look patrons in the eye.
- Encourage verbal exchanges and smile.
- Be on time for the pre-show meetings.
- Do not run, yell, or do anything that could cause a disturbance to patrons in the Concert Hall or Lobby. Youth Ushers who cause disruptions may be dismissed from the WSYO ushering program for the remainder of the season.

Pre-Concert Meeting: The usher meeting is very important and attendance is necessary. The meetings begin 1 hour and 45 minutes before the scheduled start of the performance. Since all

pertinent information about the performance is given at that time, attention to the information given is important.

At the conclusion of the meeting, all volunteers are to report to assigned work areas. When reporting to your areas, you are not to take food or drink. Personal cell phones should be used only in an emergency and should be turned off while working.

Programs: Each concert will have programs for distribution, which will be found on the ramps, in both lobbies, and in the balcony. If you find no programs, or run out, please tell the Youth Usher Director immediately.

USHER COMP TICKETS

Students ushering for the WSO will have the opportunity to receive two comp tickets. This will be 1 ticket for the student & 1 ticket for a parent/guardian.

These tickets must be reserved and picked up the week of the concert, in person at the WSO office. If an individual wishes to purchase additional tickets for a performance, they must inform the box office at the time of reservation for comp tickets. This will ensure that all seats are placed together.

All student ushers will be held to the same late seating standards as patrons and may be asked to wait before entering the hall.

225 W Douglas Ave, Suite 207, Wichita, KS, 67202

Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Contact the box office at boxoffice@wso.org or (316) 267-7658 with questions.

FRONT OF HOUSE PROCEDURES

Ticket Takers: Ticket takers are one of the first encounters patrons will have upon arrival and are the first impression of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. Please be friendly and courteous with a welcoming smile! Ticket takers will begin admitting patrons at one hour and 15 minutes prior to the start of the performance. An adult usher standing directly behind the ticket takers will help direct patrons to house right or left.

Please pay careful attention to the time and date of ticket. Ticket takers will be issued a Ticket Scanner to scan all tickets. Patrons have the option of bringing physical tickets, printed tickets or mobile tickets. In the event of a ticket scanner malfunction, please tear ticket stubs (the part

you scan), keep paper tickets, or direct mobile tickets to another scanner. Please be sure to scan the same number of tickets as patrons coming through the doors. Pay close attention to the message you receive after scanning a ticket. You should receive a “Green” screen for a valid ticket. If the ticket is for a different performance or has been exchanged please direct patrons to the box office. Do not admit someone without receiving a “Green” screen. Do NOT admit anyone without a ticket. Please direct patrons to the Box Office if there is any dispute. Youth ushers should call on the assistance of an adult usher if the Front of House Manager is unavailable.

You will continue taking tickets at your assigned entrance until the Century II Front of House Staff dismisses you. Once the performance has concluded and patrons begin to leave the hall, meet with the Front of House Manager to be dismissed. Report any issues and return lost/found items at this time to the Century II Front of House Staff. Return the usher nametag to the box office and check out with the Usher Director or Front of House Manager.

Ramp Ushers: Ramp ushers will begin distributing programs in the lobby in front of the ramp doors at one hour and 15 minutes prior to the start of the performance or whenever the lobby doors are opened. Ramp ushers should welcome patrons to the concert, and assist them in finding their seats. When the concert begins, or when the designated time has been given by the Front of House Manager, ushers should shut all entry doors (1 through 10). All ushers will remain in the ramp to assist latecomers. The latecomers should only be seated in between movements or pieces.

Once the lights come “up” for intermission, CII ushers will open entry doors. Youth Symphony ushers are not responsible for this duty.

When the second half begins, Once the performance has concluded and the lights are “up,” CII ushers will open entry doors. Return the usher nametag to the Box Office and check out with the Front of House Manager. Report any issues and return lost/found items at this time.

ALL USHERS/TICKET TAKERS/VOLUNTEERS

All ushers and ticket takers arrive one hour and 45 minutes before each performance for a brief meeting.

All ushers and ticket takers are asked to stay for the entire performance to assist patrons in and out of the Concert Hall. Please sit in the area you have been assigned since patrons may need your help during the performance.

Dress Code: Ushers may wear knee or floor-length black skirts or black dress pants with a white top, dark socks or tights, and black dress shoes. No sleeveless shirts or pants/tights with holes should be worn for ushering. If more casual dress is permitted, ushers will be informed via email the week of the event.

Seating Disputes or Duplicate Tickets: Contact a Lead Usher.

Sound and Temperature Complaints: Whenever you receive a sound or temperature complaint from patrons, thank them for letting you know, find out the nature and location of the complaint, and tell them that you will immediately inform the House Manager about it. Then, do just that. Be as specific as possible when reporting it.

Patron Misconduct: Report any issues of patron misconduct to a Lead Usher.

Accidents or Medical Emergencies: If any accident occurs, contact a Lead Usher IMMEDIATELY! Do not attempt to move the injured patron. Do not offer advice (medical or otherwise.) Even if you think it is “minor” please notify a Lead Usher & Front of House Manager.

Emergency Evacuation: In the event that the theatre must be evacuated because of an emergency situation, remain calm, listen, and follow instructions as given.

Dear Friends of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra,

We appreciate your willingness and desire to usher for the Wichita Symphony. Above we've outlined details about the duties we must require of all ushers at the WSO.

Please make sure you and a parent/guardian have fully read this handbook and sign/print both your names at the bottom with the date.

Signing this handbook means that you and your parent/guardian understand the role and tasks that will be assigned to you and that you will follow all building and organization rules and guidelines.

We couldn't do what we do without our wonderful volunteers!

WSYO Student Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please reach out to: **boxoffice@wso.org**