

## Chicago Sinfonietta appoints new President and CEO

Sidney P. Jackson, Jr., veteran non-profit and arts executive,  
assumes role May 15, 2025

**CHICAGO, IL** - Following an extensive search announced in early 2025 which drew over 186 applicants from the United States, Canada, and Europe, Chicago Sinfonietta today announced the appointment of the internationally recognized orchestra's new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).



*Sidney P. Jackson, Jr. new President and CEO of Chicago Sinfonietta; Photo credit: Brenna Falzone*

Board Chair **James Weidner** stated, "It is with great pleasure that we welcome **Sidney P. Jackson, Jr.** as the new President and CEO of Chicago Sinfonietta. He is a natural fit for our MacArthur Award-winning modern 21st century organization. Sidney's deep understanding of our mission, his extensive experience in development, his strategic acuity and his commitment to artistic excellence across varied genres make him uniquely qualified to lead us into an exciting future while preserving the legacy of our founder,

Maestro Paul Freeman. Because of Maestro Freeman's vision, Chicago Sinfonietta is recognized as a champion of innovation and inclusion, both on and off the stage.

"This is an exciting time for Chicago Sinfonietta as we head toward our 40th anniversary. Identifying the arts executive best suited to lead Chicago Sinfonietta into its next chapter is a monumental task, and I sincerely thank the Board search committee, Principal Dennis Hanthorn of Oppenheim Executive Search, and especially Wendy Lewis, who has served as the Sinfonietta's Interim CEO since January, for their dedicated efforts."

Chicago Sinfonietta will introduce Mr. Jackson as its new CEO during its concert weekend on May 9 and 10 and proudly welcomes him to the city of Chicago. While transitioning to his new post, Jackson will be concluding some special projects with New Jersey Symphony until June 13, 2025.

New Jersey Symphony President & CEO **Terry D. Loftis** stated, "While I am saddened that Sidney is leaving us, I enthusiastically congratulate him on this next chapter of his career and on becoming President and CEO of an organization I truly admire. I am thrilled that Sidney is moving into a President and CEO position, which I believe is a testament to the strong senior leadership team we have here in New Jersey, and the strength of the candidates this organization is able to attract and develop. My best wishes go out to Sidney and his family as they make this life-changing move to Chicago."

Mr. Jackson responded, "It is an extraordinary honor to lead Chicago Sinfonietta, an organization founded by the visionary Maestro Paul Freeman to shatter racial and cultural boundaries in classical music. Today, under the dynamic artistic leadership of Maestro **Mei-Ann Chen**, that mission is not only alive but thriving. As someone whose career has been rooted at the intersection of social justice and the arts, I am committed to carrying this bold legacy forward. Together with our extraordinary musicians, staff, and community, we will continue building a future where equity, innovation, and excellence define who we are."

Chicago Sinfonietta Music Director Mei-Ann Chen said, "It's an exciting new chapter for the Chicago Sinfonietta with Sidney Jackson as the new President and CEO during this time when inclusion efforts are more important than ever in the world! Sidney brings a wealth of experience and a strategic vision that blends with our mission. I am very much looking forward to having him as a partner with whom to reach new heights with Chicago Sinfonietta! Welcome Sidney!"

A cross-disciplinary leader, non-profit executive Sidney P. Jackson, Jr. brings 19 years of progressive leadership experience in driving sustainable growth in the nonprofit sector, with a strong focus in organizational development, fundraising, cultivating relationships and developing community and education programs benefitting diverse communities. Committed to inspiring and building communities through the transformative power of music in the cultural sphere, his work in the non-profit arts sector and others, including human services, children and family, anti-poverty, and justice initiatives has enabled him to create lasting impact across renowned institutions.

Jackson's unique, informed approach, blending strategic innovation and a deep commitment to equity and inclusion, has resulted in a dynamic perspective driving impactful change across arts, education, community health, and urban services sectors in today's evolving landscape.

He joins Chicago Sinfonietta from the East Coast, where he has recently served as Vice President for Development of the distinguished 102-year-old New Jersey Symphony. During his tenure, amongst his accomplishments, Jackson spearheaded a multi-million-dollar fundraising initiative that surpassed its target and expanded donor engagement and long-term support, as well as created and launched the orchestra's milestone Centennial celebration campaign.

Born in Charleston, West Virginia, Mr. Jackson grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. Prior to his post in New Jersey, Mr. Jackson worked in New York City for several non-profit organizations, amongst them Helpusadopt.org, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and Harlem School for the Arts.

### **Chicago Sinfonietta**

A tenured orchestra and acclaimed cultural leader that champions diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating community through curated symphonic experiences, Chicago Sinfonietta is a source of community through music, as well as ensuring and inspiring a continued investment in diversity and inclusivity in the genre of classical music to promote fairness and equity. Recognized as groundbreaking, dynamic and daring, with core values built around being culturally responsive and advocates of inclusivity in all aspects of the 37-year-old organization's work, Chicago Sinfonietta's unrelenting commitment to being at the forefront of innovation drives its high standard of symphonic experiences. CS takes pride in leading by example with immersive audience engagement activities, impactful career development, education, and extensive community outreach programs. Visit the Sinfonietta's website for more details, including Sinfonietta's upcoming 2025-26 season, to be announced in the near future. <https://chicagosinfonietta.org>

Download photos of Mr. Jackson [here](#).

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