

MUSIC FOR ALL
Advocacy in **Action**

Application Guide
2027 Application Cycle



Table of Contents

About Advocacy in Action

Application Guidelines 3

- Eligibility 4
- Fee 4
- Entries 5
- Evaluation Process 5
- Award Recipients 6
- Release & Usage 6
- Video Submission Guidelines 7

Things to Keep in Mind 8

- What AND How 8
- Details 8
- Context 9
- Avoid “I” Statements 10
- Suggestions for Specific Questions 11
- Supporting Materials 14

Frequently Asked Questions 15

Submission Checklist 17



About Advocacy in Action

The Advocacy in Action Awards highlight the benefits of a strong music program and show what your school or community is doing to provide access and opportunity for active music-making. The Awards also allow educators to showcase their own music programs that are sometimes overlooked or not fully understood by members of the public beyond the school community.

Being an Advocacy in Action Award Recipient is an exciting designation for students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members who believe in and support music education in schools. Award recipients are celebrated as leaders by sharing their successful initiatives for others to replicate.

The Advocacy in Action Archive is a collection of best practices that support music education in our schools. The initiatives in the Archive provide comprehensive project details about how to implement or replicate award-receiving programs so that others may experience the same successes. We hope that by sharing this free resource, we can inspire others to take action in their own programs and communities.



Application Guidelines

Eligibility

- Any United States scholastic music program (curricular or extracurricular), scholastic music booster organization, or external PK-12 arts organization is eligible to enter. This includes band, choir, color guard, orchestra, general music, and any other type of scholastic music program.
- Programs serving any age level (pre-K, elementary, middle, or high school) are eligible.
- Public, private, parochial, and charter schools are eligible.
- Any individual may submit an application (teacher, student, parent, etc.). All applications will require the signature of the program educator/instructor.
- Eligible entries must have been produced or implemented during the 2025-26 academic school year.
- Each entry must be completed in its entirety in order to be eligible for review.
- Each entry must be submitted by 11:59 P.M. ET on Monday, August 17, 2026 in order to be eligible for review.

Fee

There is no entry fee. Our intent is to ensure this program is accessible to anyone who may be interested in applying.

Entries

- Each advocacy initiative will be considered one entry. One program can submit multiple entries in multiple categories; however, each entry requires a separate application.
- Supporting materials may be included with each entry. Applicants are encouraged to submit photos, documents, videos, and/or materials supporting their entry. Video materials must follow our video submission guidelines (see page 7).
- Previous Advocacy in Action Award Recipient initiatives are not eligible to apply again with the same initiative. For example, the North H.S. Band cannot receive an Advocacy in Action Award for their Car Wash Fundraiser more than once.
- Programs MAY submit two different initiatives in the same category. For example, the North H.S. Band can fill out an application for their Car Wash Fundraiser and a second application for their 5k Fun Run Fundraiser and submit them both in the Innovative Fundraising category.
- Questions about which category your entry best fits? Email us at education@musicforall.org.

Evaluation Process

Entries will be reviewed by members of Music for All's Advocacy in Action Advisory Committee. There is no set number of how many awards may be granted in each category or in total.

Entries will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- **Effectiveness** - Awarded initiatives demonstrate evidence of success in positively engaging students, families, school administrators, and/or community members to champion music education.
- **Replicability** - Awarded initiatives could be adapted by programs in other contexts to benefit additional populations. Adequate details and resources are provided to support other programs in replicating success.
- **Innovation** - Awarded initiatives demonstrate “outside the box” strategies that not only tackle key obstacles to effectiveness but also differ from approaches seen in initiatives with similar goals, and are created and implemented with purpose.
- **Presentation** - Awarded initiatives submit applications that are clear, professional, and compelling.

Award Recipients

- All award recipients will be notified by email in early December 2026. Notification will be sent to the contact listed on the entry form.
- Honorees may be asked to submit additional information or be interviewed for Advocacy in Action promotional materials.
- 2027 Advocacy in Action award recipients will be publicly announced and showcased beginning in January 2027.
- Award recipients will be promoted as featured advocacy content throughout the 2027 Music for All National Festival, BOA Summer Camp, and Bands of America Championships.
- Award recipients will also be showcased at state and national music education events where Music for All has a presence.
- Award recipients will receive a plaque and other branded gifts to help celebrate the recognition.

Release & Usage

By submitting your entry to the Advocacy in Action Awards, you grant Music for All the right to use any submitted materials—including, but not limited to, photos and video—for editorial, analytical, promotional, or any other purposes without additional compensation or permission. In addition, you acknowledge that your entry and any corresponding materials are not returnable, and will be made available to the public if selected as an award recipient. The complete submission of an entry indicates acknowledgment and agreement to these terms.

Video Submission Guidelines

Video submissions and supporting video materials may be submitted in one of two ways. You may upload a link to a video hosted on an online platform such as YouTube or Vimeo, or videos may also be submitted as digital attachments. Video submissions should be limited to a 20-minute maximum length.



Things to Keep in Mind

Our outstanding collection of effective practices and initiatives is curated directly from information provided by award recipients during the application process. If selected as an award recipient, Music for All may publicly share your responses as written. Please consider this and the additional information below prior to submitting your application.

What AND How

Remember that only a portion of your Advocacy in Action application is focused on WHAT your advocacy initiative is. Most of the application is to explain HOW your initiative came to be. Think of it as a recipe; for others to replicate it, you need to provide them with an ingredient list as well as clear and detailed instructions on how to combine those ingredients to get the final product.

Details

When answering questions, please try to include as much detail as possible. Try to write the information as if you were giving someone else instructions on how to do it - think of your recipe!

Also, be sure to answer all parts of the question. Several application questions ask for both a “what” and a “how.”

Example:

What strategies did you use for marketing and promoting your advocacy initiative, and how did this positively impact your efforts?

Without detail: Parents and community members were invited to our event. We distributed more flyers this year, and event attendance increased greatly.

With detail: Our strategy was to have multiple touch points and reminders to our intended audience leading up to the event. When marketing to parents, students were sent home with a flyer to share with their families, information was included in the monthly school newsletter in the two months leading up to the event, and a final reminder email went out early the week of the event.

When marketing to community members, we promoted the event on our program and school social media accounts, posted flyers in restaurants and shops around town, and placed a small ad in the local newspaper.

It is clear that the multiple touch points to parents/families and the community had a positive impact as event attendance was approximately 450, which was an increase from approximately 325 attendees the year prior.

Context

When providing numbers or statistics, we encourage you to provide this information with context as needed and whenever possible.

Examples:

Without context: 45 students benefited from our advocacy initiative.

With context: 45 of the 60 students in the program, or 75%, benefited from our advocacy initiative.

Without context: We raised \$20,000 through our advocacy initiative.

With context: Our annual program budget is \$50,000. We raised \$20,000, or 40% of our annual program budget, through our advocacy initiative.

Avoid “I” Statements

Applications should avoid being written in first-person language whenever possible. This award is not intended to solely highlight the great work done by a teacher, booster, or administrator. The focus should be on the program as a whole. Avoid using specific names when referring to roles/jobs and instead use titles such as director/booster president/fundraising chairperson/student leader instead.

Example:

With “I” statements: When I took over this program, I wanted to focus more of our efforts on fundraising. I spent a lot of time working with Joe Smith, who is in charge of our fundraising committee, to brainstorm ways to revamp our fundraising efforts.

Without “I” statements: When program leaders decided they wanted to put more efforts behind fundraising, the first step was brainstorming among program directors and the head of the fundraising committee.



Suggestions for Specific Questions

What were the objectives of your advocacy initiative?

When providing an answer for this question on the application, you may find it easier to clearly state your objectives by using numbers or bullet points rather than writing in paragraph form. Keep in mind that most of your objectives do not need justification. If your objective is to increase the number of 6th-grade students in the orchestra program, you don't need to write an additional three sentences on why being in orchestra is beneficial for students - we already know that!

Please elaborate on the overall timeline of your advocacy initiative and chronological order of operations.

When providing an answer for this question on the application, please feel welcome to use bullet points or numbers rather than writing in paragraph form. They can be listed by order of operations or in timeline order, whichever makes the most sense for your initiative.

Example:

1. Determine committee members - Committee members are determined in early December each year by the director and the committee chairperson.
2. First Committee Meeting - The first committee meeting usually takes place during the second week of January. The committee then meets every two weeks leading up to the event.

Or

- December - The committee chairperson and director determine who will be asked to be a committee member.
- January - The first committee meeting takes place, with meetings occurring every two weeks leading up to the event.

Who was involved in the planning and execution of your advocacy initiative? Please list their roles and time commitments.

As a reminder from page 10, “Applications should avoid being written in first-person language whenever possible. This award is not intended to solely highlight the great work done by a teacher, booster, or administrator. The focus should be on the program as a whole. Avoid using specific names when referring to roles/jobs and use titles such as director/booster president/fundraising chairperson/student leader instead.

When providing an answer for this question on the application, feel welcome to write as a list or with bullet points rather than paragraph form. Don’t forget to answer all parts of the question!

What tools and resources did you use for your advocacy initiative?

When providing an answer for this question on the application, think about the potential resources and tools that may have been used in your advocacy initiative such as:

- Digital Resources - Common digital resources may include Remind, Canva, Schoology, Google Drive
- Personal Resources - Did you take advantage of a relationship with a community partner? Do you have a booster parent with a special skill?
- Physical Resources - Did you utilize a specific space or technology equipment?

Was your advocacy initiative effective, and what data supports your effectiveness measurement?

When providing proof of success of your advocacy initiative, do your best to provide specifics. If you have data, then be sure to share it! If you don't, refer to the qualitative data you can share. Did you get countless positive comments from parents or administrators regarding your initiative? Did you overhear students talking about how much they enjoyed the initiative or can't wait for the next one?



Supporting Materials

One of the most important things to consider during the submission process is the provision of supporting materials. Quality supporting materials are the best tool to help others successfully replicate your initiative in their own programs. While we greatly encourage including photos of your initiative in your application, don't forget the other materials that exist that helped in the planning and promotion of your initiative.

Please be aware that the supporting materials provided will be available to the public on your online archive page if you are selected as an award recipient.

Examples:

- Stage rundowns
- Event timelines and schedules
- Event maps
- Volunteer sign up sheets
- Screenshots of social media posts
- Event flyers
- Email templates to parents or administrators
- Any materials used by students
- Event signage
- Budget templates

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a limit to the number of entries I can submit?

No. You may submit as many entries to as many categories as you wish, but keep in mind that each entry requires a separate application.

Are we able to submit more than one application in a single category?

Yes! If you have two great fundraising initiatives, share them both!

My entry might fit into more than one category. Can I submit it in both?

Please refrain from submitting the same entry into two different categories. Some advocacy initiatives can easily fall into two categories. You are welcome to reach out to Music for All for a recommendation, or pick the one you think your initiative best aligns with. If, during the evaluation process, evaluators feel your initiative best fits into another category, we will contact you!

I'm not the director or instructor of my school music program. Can I submit an entry for something our program does?

Yes! Anyone is eligible to submit an entry for the Advocacy in Action Awards (boosters, administrators, students, etc.) We do ask, however, that anyone nominating their local music program verify their submission with the signature of their program's director/instructor.

Who evaluates the Advocacy in Action Awards applications?

Applications are reviewed by members of the Advocacy in Action Advisory Committee, which is made up of educators, administrators, community leaders, Music for All partners, and business leaders.

How are the Advocacy in Action Awards entries evaluated?

Each category will be assigned a panel of 3-5 evaluators.

Pages 5 and 6 of this Application Guide share more information on evaluation criteria.

Each and every music program that enters is unique; therefore, evaluation is based on the subjective opinion of the evaluators influenced by their expertise in the profession and their knowledge of that category area.

For categories that require a link to be submitted, how long should the links remain active?

Even though you may be submitting your entry in spring or summer, entries will not be evaluated until the fall. Even after the judging takes place, there is work that must occur in order to prepare the materials for the Awards presentation and online publishing. We ask that all links remain active through January of the next calendar year.

If you have further questions about the Advocacy in Action Awards, please contact Emily Timmons at emily.t@musicforall.org or (317) 218-4922.

Submission Checklist

Confirm that email addresses and other contact information provided is correct

Confirm that you have answered all parts of the application questions

Confirm that you have answered the application questions with context, details, and without using “I” statements

Confirm that you have provided necessary supporting materials

Inform the recipients of the Verification Form(s) attached to your application are expecting to receive them via email

Check for spelling and grammar