

# 2026 UPAF AMBASSADOR GUIDE



UNITEDPERFORMINGARTSFUND

**Where passion becomes  
lifelong support.**

Easy steps to hosting a UPAF  
Workplace Giving campaign.

# UNITED PERFORMING ARTS FUND

## VISION

A thriving Southeastern Wisconsin community uplifted by the performing arts.

## PILLARS

UPAF is guided by the following four pillars:

1

### Wide Scope of Investment:

UPAF invests in a diversity of local performing arts organizations - in terms of size, focus and discipline - allowing donors to support the entire ecosystem with one gift.

2

### Regional Vibrance:

UPAF's strategic stewardship contributes to the vibrancy and growth of the entire region by:

- Fostering creativity and innovation across sectors
- Enhancing the business sector's opportunities to attract and retain talent
- Stimulating related economic activity

3

### Arts Education and Accessibility:

UPAF invests in programs that provide performing arts access and education, ensuring targeted support reaches youth who live in underserved communities. UPAF supports programs which provide accommodations so that everyone, regardless of ability, can access the performing arts.

4

**Inspiring Involvement:** UPAF promotes the role of the arts in contributing to a healthy community by nurturing a pipeline of life-long performing arts enthusiasts and donors. Through fundraising best practices and special events, UPAF develops opportunities that deepen appreciation of and commitment to the performing arts.

## MISSION

UPAF advances the vitality of Southeastern Wisconsin by raising essential funds, providing strategic stewardship and involvement in the performing arts.

## DEFINING SOUTHEASTERN, WI

UPAF aligns with the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) in defining the Southeastern Wisconsin region as encompassing seven counties: Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha, Walworth, Racine and Kenosha.



Kaylene Howard in Renaissance Theaterworks' production of "The Moors" by Jen Silverman. Photo by Ross Zentner.





# Your Work as a UPAF Ambassador Helps Our Local Community

## Dear UPAF Ambassadors,

Thank you for your leadership as a United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) Workplace Giving Campaign Ambassador. Your commitment plays a vital role in sustaining our region's exceptional performing arts community and ensuring these organizations remain accessible to all. Ambassadors help drive more than a third of UPAF's annual support! Your leadership makes an impact that immediately helps support the creativity, education, accessibility, and inspiration delivered by our 14 Members and many Affiliates.

Whether this is your first campaign or you are a seasoned Ambassador, please know you are not doing this work alone. UPAF equips you with the tools, resources, and support needed to plan a successful and engaging campaign. From this guidebook to the online Prop Shop, you will find everything you need to host a meaningful, fun, and effective workplace campaign. We can't wait to see what you come up with!

We're here for you. Each Ambassador is paired with UPAF Staff members who will assist you every step of the way. They will help brainstorm ideas, coordinate speakers and performers, provide materials, and support your planning committee in building momentum. In short, we are here to ensure your success.

We are deeply grateful for your time, energy, and passion. Together, we can ensure that the performing arts continue to thrive in Southeastern Wisconsin!

In partnership,



Annemarie Scobey-Polacheck  
President & CEO

## THE BENEFITS OF SERVING AS AN AMBASSADOR

- Leadership recognition in your company
- Team and career-building skills
- Networking opportunities
- Expertise on the impact of the performing arts
- Pop-up performance opportunities and ticket giveaways



Bel Canto Chorus. Photo Melissa Miller Photography

UPAF ensures a **vibrant** and **inclusive** performing arts scene for everyone in our community.

### Entertainment Excellence

Ensuring Southeastern Wisconsin has the best in music, dance and theater.

### Arts Accessibility

Offering opportunities for all to enjoy the magic of the performing arts.

### Regional Impact

Providing operational funding to employ thousands of local artists and maintain a world-class performing arts scene that helps attract and retain employees to the region.



UPAF holds the highest rating from Charity Navigator for financial management, transparency and accountability. You can have confidence that your donation will be used with the utmost responsibility.

UPAF receives NO government funding. Generous individuals, companies and foundations contribute all dollars raised.

# Planning Timeline and Key Components to Success

No matter if your workplace campaign is 3 days or 2 weeks, we recommend adhering to this timeline for the best results



## Timeline Checklist

### TWO MONTHS PRIOR

- ☐ **Attend UPAF Ambassador Training**
- ☐ **Secure Leadership Involvement**  
Engage key company leaders early. Ensure they support the campaign, will be visible champions, and help encourage broad participation to achieve campaign goals.
- ☐ **Set Your Workplace Giving Campaign Dates**  
Confirm campaign timing with company leadership and UPAF staff.
- ☐ **Recruit a Cross-Department Planning Committee**  
Gather enthusiastic colleagues from different departments and levels to increase creativity, reach, and energy. Depending on the size of your organization, identify key communications and payroll contacts.
- ☐ **Confirm Your Company's Matching Gift Policy**  
If matching is available, highlight this prominently in all leadership and employee communications. Unsure if your company matches? Ask your CEO or HR Department.
- ☐ **Meet with UPAF Staff to:**
  - Review the previous campaign's performance
  - Align on strategy and campaign goals that fit your organization's culture and vision
  - Review the Prop Shop for campaign tools
  - Discuss events, performances, and incentives to boost turnout
  - Identify materials needed and internal partners for collaboration
- ☐ **Determine Campaign Events**  
Events to coordinate may include:
  - Welcoming employees to work (treats, music, signage)
  - Kickoff with a performance or testimonial
  - Leadership gathering to kickstart or boost the campaign with top management pledges
  - A Next Generation UPAF event to connect young professionals (20s–40s)
- ☐ **Leverage Company Provided Incentives**  
Examples include:
  - Premiere parking
  - Time off
  - Food, coffee, treats
  - Company swag
  - Tickets or gift cards
- ☐ **Plan Out Your Communications:**
  - Calendar invites or event registrations
  - CEO kickoff message announcing the campaign
  - Incentive promotions (company provided, UPAF SMART CARD, Give & Win Sweepstakes)
  - Donation reminder with embedded giving link
  - Campaign progress updates
  - Final thank-you message with amount raised



Top: Josie Van Slyke in Renaissance Theaterworks' production of "The Nether" by Jennifer Haley. Photo Ross Zentner. Left: Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra sensory friendly performance. Photo Valerie Hill.



## FOUR WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Confirm your campaign event timeline
- ☐ Request speaker/performance opportunities
- ☐ Complete the online Workplace Set-up Form
- ☐ Finalize additional incentives for campaign

## TWO WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Create a run of show for any events  
For example, for a 30 minute presentation:
  - CEO welcome + importance of giving + introduction of UPAF speaker (5min)
  - UPAF Representative on UPAF Impact (5-7 minutes)
  - Performance and testimonial (10-15 minutes)
  - UPAF Representative on benefits of giving (3-5 minutes)

## ONE WEEK OUT

- ☐ Announce your campaign with intranet posts, emails, calendar invites
- ☐ Hang posters, start digital signage, plan for distribution of brochures (desk drop, handout at event, display in common area)

## DURING THE CAMPAIGN

- ☐ Continue communications about campaign events, incentives, and deadlines
- ☐ Capture the fun of your events – take photos, share stories
- ☐ Post on social media and tag UPAF / hashtags #ForTheArts #UPAF
- ☐ Monitor your progress and check in with UPAF staff
- ☐ Remind individuals who have yet to pledge, especially those who typically give via payroll deduction

## END OF CAMPAIGN

- ☐ Cash or checks? Be sure to submit your envelope
- ☐ Confirm your payroll deduction details
- ☐ Announce your campaign results to all employees and send a thank you message
- ☐ Award incentives and prizes
- ☐ Provide UPAF feedback

**Visit the online Prop Shop ([UPAF.org/PropShop](https://UPAF.org/PropShop)) to review campaign materials and spark ideas!**



Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performing Beethoven's 9th Symphony  
Photo Jonathan Kirn

# Beyond the Stage: Arts Education



UPAF Bright minds delivers high-quality education programming, preparing students with the tools to be successful in work and life. UPAF's comprehensive program evaluation measures student growth across five skills deemed essential for future success.

**100% OF STUDENTS**  
experience growth in  
at least one area

**47% EXPERIENCE  
GROWTH**  
across all five skills



## UPAF CORNERSTONE GROUPS



The  
Florentine  
Opera



## UPAF MEMBER GROUPS



## UPAF AFFILIATES

Above the Clouds  
Bembé Drum and Dance  
Festival City Symphony  
Frankly Music

Kids From Wisconsin  
Latino Arts  
Marcus Performing Arts  
Center

Milwaukee Jazz Institute  
Milwaukee Opera Theatre  
Milwaukee Youth Theatre  
Racine Symphony Orchestra

Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for  
the Arts  
Studio K Flamenco  
TBey Arts Center, Inc.

Waukesha Civic Theatre  
Wild Space Dance Company  
Wisconsin Conservatory of  
Music



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Cover: Florentine Opera's cast of *Carmen*. Above: School group visit to Florentine Opera performance of *Cinderella*.  
Photos Traveling Lemur Productions.