



SSN CHORAL FESTIVAL 2018 EARLY PLANNING DOCUMENT

**REQUEST SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES TO THE SSN STEERING COMMITTEE BY
FEBRUARY 15, 2016 AT helm@sistersingers.net.**

This is a call for proposals regarding the hosting of the 12th Sister Singers Network National (or International) Women's Choral Festival in 2018.

This document is made available to network members in an effort to help facilitate more frequent gatherings and exchanges of information for network choruses. It was initially created in 2003, is reviewed and updated after each festival, and is now available to members with interest in hosting future festivals and gatherings. The goal of the Early Planning Document (EPD) is to ease the process and keep us going forward, instead of reinventing the wheel when it comes to planning festivals.

The EPD will guide you to create a proposal in a specific format, providing information in each area to the degree you are able at this early date. We hope this will be a helpful way for everyone to have the salient information from which to make a final decision on the location of the next festival.

Please review information provided on the Sister Singers Network website, www.sistersingers.net, including previous meeting and festival notes, prior to submitting your proposal. A lot of helpful information can be found on the website.

Based on past experience, the most logical timing within a year to have a festival is between Memorial Day and Labor Day, due to the seasonal nature of most choruses. However, there are good reasons for having a festival at various times within a year. These would include such things as prices, availability of venues, and the local weather.

Responses to this call are due to the SSN Steering Committee no later than February 15, 2016. Sooner would be good!

Completed proposals will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and the festival host will be announced at the spring 2016 SSN annual meeting. You are strongly encouraged to contact SSN with questions as you are putting together your proposal. You are also strongly encouraged to send a representative to the 2015 meeting to indicate your interest in hosting and 2016 meeting to make a presentation about your festival plans. Member choruses with a serious interest in hosting a 2018 festival may petition the network for financial assistance, if needed, in order to be able to participate in this meeting.

When you are ready to step up to plan and host the next SSN festival, remember that there will be many resources available to assist you. You will have seed money with which to enter

into contracts, etc. You will have access to past festival planning materials and individuals with experience within our network who are willing and excited to help. The resources of SSN and the SSN Steering Committee are available for guidance and clarification of policy and issues.

PART 1: YOUR VISION FOR A FESTIVAL

Please describe your vision of the festival you would like to plan.

PART 2: ITEMS TO CONSIDER INCLUDING WHEN SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

A. PERFORMANCE SPACE

1. Staging - How many singers can fit on the stage? Will mass chorus performance be staged at same location as individual chorus performances, or will it need to be at a different location? Are risers available?
2. Sound system - Is a system available on site? What type? Will it be adequate?
3. Lighting - Ability to control lighting, will anything require specialized lighting?
4. Seating capacity - Seek a venue that will seat between 600 and 1200 individuals. Question to consider: will the concerts be open to the public?
5. Sound quality - Sound quality will be a primary concern of many of the participants.
6. Technical staff - Will the venue provide staff, or allow for qualified individuals to run their equipment? Union rules and regulations?
7. Rehearsal space - Where will choruses rehearse? And when (need quiet during performance)?
8. Rest rooms - Are there an adequate number of these available?
9. Will you seek and plan for paid performers or emcees from outside SSN? Some SSN festivals have had these, some have not.

B. FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

1. Workshops:
 - Space - Are various sizes of rooms available?
 - Equipment - May need pianos, other musical instruments, music stands, projectors?
 - Intensives or Multi-Day Workshops? Some SSN festivals have had these, some have not.
2. Meeting space for SSN business meeting or other meetings?
3. Reception space - where to host an opening reception?
4. Dance space – where to host a closing party/dance?
5. Chorus vending (e.g. CD's, t-shirts) and/or crafts sales area planned? Size? Visibility? Security? Work with Goldenrod or other vendor management?

C. HOUSING/ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Number of nights needed - The network can provide guidance on signing contracts with hotels or universities.
2. Number of rooms needed - Can get pre-registration information for estimates.
3. Range of costs - Important to attendees who are on a budget.
4. Will you offer any community housing? If so, consider pet/ smoking/ fragrance/ accessibility issues, as well as your chorus member and local community resources
5. Transportation and/or convenience to other venues
6. Is it possible for attendees to arrive early or stay late in the festival housing?

D. TRANSPORTATION

1. Public transportation - airports, buses, subway, etc. - How will travelers get to your city? How will you plan to move them around once they are there?
2. Shuttles/taxis
3. Will additional transportation be needed/ provided by festival planners?

E. FOOD

1. Available restaurants in area
2. Food service needed?
3. What will be included in the registration fees?
4. Will you be able to respond to specialized food needs (e.g. gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, etc)

F. ACCESSIBILITY

Consider for all areas of planning: venues, transportation, staging, meals, music, recordings, etc.

1. Mobility issues of participants
2. Special needs of participants
3. ASL interpretation
4. Braille

G. RECORDING/ARCHIVING

How will you organize?

1. Audio recordings - Artist permissions, copyrights, fees, performer permissions. Recording for participant record only, or for resale? Equipment: on-site? Contracted? (Similar issues with video recording.)
2. Video recording - Member/artist permissions
3. Rehearsal recording - likely will be needed, particularly for mass chorus music
4. Photography – during performances? Of choruses pre- or post-performance? Hire professional or use volunteer?

H. COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING REGISTRATION ITEMS)

1. Pre-festival communications:
 - Email: This was the most used method for the last three festivals.
 - Snail mail: Mass chorus music, signed forms, checks for registrations, etc. Use mailing address or P.O. Box.
 - Web: Festival website will be important for publicity and ease of communications. What features will you be able to build into a website? Does your organizing group have website building skills, or will you need help from the network?
 - Online Registration: How will you provide registration? What resources might you need?
 - Evaluation: how will you solicit evaluation of festival activities for SSN?

2. At Festival Communications:
 - Concert Program
 - Festival Program or Binder
 - Registration area
 - Mobile phones/walkie-talkies
 - Message center
 - Rehearsal, performance schedules
 - Signage

PART 3: SEED MONEY

Seed money is available to the next festival hosts to assist with deposits and prepayments. After the festival books are closed, the seed money is returned to the network. Three of the last four festival hosts actually increased the amount of money returned to the network. This is great, but it is not a requirement.

While SSN promotes fiscal conservatism and the use of modest accommodations that keep expenses reasonable, it is conceivable that unforeseen circumstances could result in a festival sustaining a loss. In that case, the seed money advanced by the network would be available to offset a loss.

What kind of financial goal does your organizing group have for the festival?

PART 4: SISTER SINGERS NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE (HELM)?

What questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions do you have for the committee?

PART 5: OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1. Local support: Will you garner support from local city and organizations? For example, Convention & Visitors Bureaus are often a good source of assistance.
2. Mass Chorus: What will be the mass chorus venue and size, choice and dissemination of music, before and at festival rehearsals, technical considerations, director(s)? Documentation is available on how this has been handled previously.
3. Funds and Budgeting: use of seed money, separate festival checking account, grant writing, solicitations, etc.
4. Tax status: A 501(c)3 status for host chorus is desirable, and necessary to apply for most grant funding.
5. Local Volunteers: Numbers, sources, and availability of local volunteers needed for the festival will be important to consider.
6. Visual Image/Marketing: Will you want a festival logo to use on materials for participants, etc? Will you produce "festie" goods, such as t-shirts, water bottles, etc?
7. Potential issues: Will you have women only space (e.g. workshops)? Will you allow men on stage? Will you provide childcare? Consider exchange rates for out-of-U.S. participants?

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