



SISTER SINGERS NETWORK FESTIVAL 2014 EARLY PLANNING DOCUMENT

REQUEST SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES TO THE SSN STEERING COMMITTEE BY FEBRUARY 15, 2012.

This is a call for proposals regarding the hosting of the 11th Sister Singers Network National (or International) Women's Choral Festival in 2014.

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 and is now made 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 re-inventing 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, 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 July 4th, 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 back to the SSN Steering Committee by February 15, 2012.

Completed proposals will be reviewed and discussed at the Spring 2012, SSN meeting. You are strongly encouraged to send a representative to this meeting to respond to any questions or concerns regarding your proposal. Member choruses with a serious interest in hosting a 2014 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 past festival planning materials and individuals with experience within our network that are willing and excited to help. The resources of SSN and the SSN Helm are available for guidance and clarification of policy and issues.

PART 1: HELPFUL ITEMS TO CONSIDER 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 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?
 - Intensive workshops? - Some SSN festivals have had these some have not.
2. Meeting space for SSN business meetings?
3. Reception space - Plan to host a reception, opening or closing?
4. Vending and/or crafts sale area planned? Size? Visibility? Security?

C. HOUSING/ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Number of nights needed - The network can provide guidance on signing contracts with hotels.
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. Community housing available? - Consider pet/ smoking/ fragrance/ accessibility issues.
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?

F. ACCESSIBILITY

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

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

G. RECORDING/ARCHIVING

Will these be things you will plan to offer at the festival?

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 Tapes - likely will be needed especially if you host a mass chorus or similar
4. Photography – during performances? of choruses pre- or post-performance?

H. COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING REGISTRATION ITEMS)

1. Pre-festival communications:
 - Email: This was the most used method for the last two festivals.
 - Snail mail: Rehearsal tapes, 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 web site (will you do registration online)? Does your organizing group have web site building skills, or will you need help from the network?

2. At Festival Communications:

- Concert program
- Festival program
- Registration area
- Mobile phones/walkie-talkies
- Message center
- Rehearsal, performance schedules
- Signage

PART 2: YOUR VISION FOR A FESTIVAL

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

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 HELM (STEERING COMMITTEE)?

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

PART 5: OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1. Local support: Will you garner support from local city and organizations? - Convention & Visitor's Bureaus are often a good source of assistance, for example.
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)?
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: Will you want a festival logo to use on materials for participants, etc? Will you produce "festie" goods, such as t-shirts, etc?
7. Potential issues: Will you have women only space? Allow men on stage? Provide child care? Consider exchange rates for out-of-U.S. participants?