Chapter Choices to Address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Introduction

By examining and reflecting on choices we make as individuals and as groups, we get to learn and re-discover how to enrich the ways that we are welcoming. What we stand to gain is precious: new knowledge and new understandings of each other and the communities in which we rehearse and sing.

Before You Begin:

We are excited to share the contents of "Chapter Choices" with you. The intent of this particular tool is to provide you with perspectives that are meant to support your chorus as you make choices that will help you move toward a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse future.

We recognize the journey towards this future as one that is unique to each chorus and even to each individual within the organization. Some of us are at the very beginning of that journey, others have taken their important first steps, and others are farther along in this journey.

This tool offers input that we hope will be valuable to you, wherever you are on your journey. There is a lot of information here and we recognize that taken all together, it may look and feel overwhelming! While you explore what is offered here, we encourage you to recognize what fits for you now, identify what you see as useful in taking your next step forward, and make note of those that will be of value to you in the longer term. We expect that this tool will be one you revisit many times along the journey!

Consider the use of the tool as an analogy of the road we travel as we learn a song. We move from the initial steps of learning notes and words to the integration of visual and expression plans and then to hours of rehearsal to fine tune until we are ready to perform our new creation in deeply felt communication with each other and our audiences.

This journey is similar – and magnified. It can only come about with the commitment of individuals to the direction and goals of the chorus. It requires a strong foundation of understanding and requires time for careful planning. The skills and habits that we will want to build require practice. We need to track our progress, learn from our mistakes, and make corrections and adjustments along the way. And just like the efforts to perfect our musical product result in that thrilling connection with our audience, the choices we make to move us toward more inclusion, equity, and diversity will connect us even more strongly to each other, to our future members and yes, even to those thrilling audiences.

Everything included in the tool is offered to support you on your journey. The only expectation of the organization is that you review its contents, consider where there is value for your chorus, and implement what works best for you.

We look forward to hearing from you as you explore. We are all learning together, and we know that as you dig into this tool, you will see opportunities for improvement and the tool will continue to evolve over time. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, through the work of the Chorus Toolkit Subcommittee will oversee the maintenance of this tool. If you have comments or questions, please email them to chorustoolkit@sweetadelines.com.

Thinking in a New Way

Thoughtful use of our growing awareness helps us build towards a more broadly welcoming and inclusive space for all. By space, we're talking about all of the physical and digital places where we interact with each other, with our audiences, with donors and/or sponsors, and with the public who have not yet engaged with us so directly, including the public who may belong to, or be connected with, populations who may feel marginalized.

To adopt DEI changes in a meaningful way and own them, we need to understand them. If we fully understand, we can have a real impact on creating a more inclusive destination for present and future singers, and a broader audience appeal. If we attempt to move forward without real understanding, we run a high risk of undermining our good intentions. Actions can result in pitfalls like tokenism[1] (e.g. do one specific action and call it done to be seen as "inclusive"), and cultural appropriation[2] (e.g. grabbing some new Black culture dance steps to use in the front row). Besides the harm that this kind of behavior does to the people of the affected community, social media and other publicity of the action can multiply very quickly both inside and outside the barbershop singing world, hurting even more people and damaging a chorus's reputation for a very long time. Needless to say, a chorus that is seen as unwelcoming or insulting will have a hard time attracting new members or audiences, even if the offending action was unintentional.

We need to evaluate alternative options apart from "how it's always been done" and make informed decisions about how best to move forward in a spirit of genuine goodwill. We may need to risk a little bit of comfort, too. As barbershoppers we have learned from taking songs from paper to performance that the daring, even risky, moments of learning are where our magic comes to life.

Music Choices

How can awareness of issues and choices surrounding our chorus repertoire help create and maintain diverse inclusivity?

Music choices are a large part of our organization. The music we sing is our calling card, our advertising, and our strongest call to membership. Sometimes when what we hear is that harmony with lock and ring, others hear messages in our music that we may not intend to communicate. In this section, we focus in greater detail on choosing repertoire that can create a more inclusive chorus environment.

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[1] Tokenism is defined as diversity without inclusion; a perfunctory effort to meet numerical diversity goals or create the appearance of diversity without making effective changes." It goes without saying that we want to avoid tokenism in our work toward true, genuine diversity, and inclusion.

[2] Cultural appropriation is the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society.

The Sweet Adelines Song Assessment Tool (SAT) is one of the primary tools provided to assist our members in making informed and intentional choices about their repertoire. The SAT includes questions for analysis of songs and a growing database of songs that have been researched to identify potential issues related to inclusion. The SAT can be found by logging in to the Sweet Adelines International website.

The following themes help develop awareness of more inclusive choices:

Some overall choices we can make to address diversity and inclusion in music are:

- Do not include songs assessed as inadmissible through the SAT process in our repertoire.
- Consider expanding our repertoire to be inclusive of under-represented diverse groups within our group or audiences.
- Choose carefully when doing this, always ensuring we remain respectful towards the under-represented groups we do include in repertoire. If a song is not performed in a genuine and respectful way, it can present as mocking, tokenizing, or appropriating a different culture. Performing in a respectful manner may not be achievable for some songs rooted in a particular time/place, or may be suitable only for groups who can deliver them authentically.
- Change lyrics to the extent such changes will result in eliminating the offending aspect.

After these choices are made is a great time to re-evaluate repertoire as though for the first time. Some choices may inadvertently reinforce a bias on a different scale (i.e. you now have equal songs sung to men and women, but one is about romance and all of the others are about friendship). You may end up making choices that you modify down the road, and that's okay. Each step is important.

- If a song is admissible but requires sensitivity due to its origins or common usage, consider carefully about adding it to your repertoire. Create emceeing to explain the context in which the song is being presented to ensure it has the intended impact on the performers and the audience.

Songs with Racial/Ethnic History

History in and of itself is not bad to sing about. However, there have been oppressive periods of history that are glorified in various ways, including in song. Some songs considered "strong" for competition purposes were, for decades, performed in blackface minstrel theatrical form, containing offensive lyrics, or both. Many of these, as well as other songs, speak to a nostalgia for times that may be based on fond memories, but the experience of the positive aspects of those times excluded people based on their race or ethnicity or even worse, were built upon the oppression of those people. The performance of these songs creates a negative experience for many participants. This is especially true for songs written during the 1920s and 1930s that were about the Southern United States, post-slavery, and pre-Civil Rights.

Besides using the SAT (which is required for competition songs and should be used for all repertoire, competition or not), your chorus may benefit from discussing the following questions:

- What is the song really about?
- Does it glorify, commemorate or romanticize a harmful period or event?
- Were the periods or events in the song experienced by all people in the same way or were some more included and others excluded because of identities at the time?
- Who wrote it and what was it written for?
- Will our song choices limit the audiences we perform for?
- Could we lose potential performance opportunities or members if we keep these songs in our repertoire?

Potential actions for addressing songs involving *racial/ethnic* history include:

- Check the SAT to see if the song has been added to the database. If it has not, complete an assessment using the SAT forms. If the song is rated as inadmissible, do not include it in your Sweet Adelines repertoire.
- When evaluating lyrics, it is important to consider the meaning or history of the song to determine if the song itself, even with a change to the lyrics, may still be alienating or hurtful to those who know it. In this case, changing an offending lyric may not make the song any less alienating or hurtful, and it is not admissible for Sweet Adeline performances (e.g. songs that were originally used to represent groups of people in a derogatory way are not made admissible by updating specific references to that group – the original intent of the song is unchanged)
- There are cases where the presence of an objectionable word is not associated with the meaning of a song, and is not relevant to its history. In this case word substitution (subject to copyright rules) can change the potential impact of the song on singers and audiences, and therefore affect the admissibility of the song for Sweet Adeline performances (e.g. the intent of some seasonal songs that include the word 'Eskimo' do not present that word in any derogatory way, and it can be removed and does not change anything about the original intent of the song).

Songs with Gendered Language

It may be helpful here to clarify the meanings of "sex" and "gender" to understand this piece of inclusion. We are frequently habituated to see the world as gender binary (acknowledging male/female as the only identities that exist). Gender identities are more of a continuum, and may change over time. "Sex" refers only to reproductive biology, with no regard for socially constructed roles, behaviors, or gender identities and expression. Gender is separate from sex.

When a song refers to a man or woman, it can feel exclusive to non-binary, questioning, and perhaps transitioning people, among others. Just as importantly, many songs make assumptions about gender-specific societal roles, generally divided according to whether one is male or female. As we consider present and future repertoire choices, questions to ask about the language in songs include:

- Do relationship songs in our repertoire represent feelings that apply across the full spectrum of gender identities?
- What is the story of the character who is singing the song?
- How likely is it that everyone on your risers will be able to authentically connect to that character?
- How likely is it that audience members will feel a genuine connection to that character?

- Can we think of a person who is continually left out of the characterizations and story?
- How could our music choices speak more inclusively to everyone?

Choices we can make to address **gendered language**:

- Ensure a mix of gender pronouns in the repertoire.
- Review our existing repertoire for opportunities to change or remove gendered pronouns or language. Examples: "girl and guy" might become "you and I," "he" or "she" might become "they," and "him" or "her" might become "them." (Lyric changes typically require permission from copyright holders. Please verify with the copyright holder that the changes are acceptable.)
- Seek out songs written or arranged to be gender neutral. Some songs may seem suitable when they sing of love towards "you," however consider stereotypes throughout the lyrics, such as, "pretty" versus "handsome." Some songs adapt more easily than others. (Lyric changes typically require permission from copyright holders. Please verify with the copyright holder that the changes are acceptable.)
- Be aware that songs that use "he" and "she" are often exclusionary to non-binary people (those who identify as neither male nor female).

Songs with Religious Themes/Undertones

For some people, religion is not a part of life, whether by background or by choice. For others, religion is so ingrained in their life and experiences that they may not always realize where their own religious culture ends and the cultures of others begins. For that reason, songs with religious themes, undertones, and associations can feel exclusionary.

Sometimes discomfort stems from the song's religious lyrics. Sometimes discomfort stems from specific songs being associated with religions that have historic or current negative, exclusionary, or narrow views of others who believe differently or of particular groups of people, such as the LGBTQ+ community. In such situations, lyric changes or consideration of themes will not make a religious song more acceptable to people affected by the religious organization's exclusionary views. More subtly, some songs include language with religious connotations, such as "blessing" or "pray/prayer."

It is important to pay attention to what themes or lyrics in your music might be based in religion, even if the song itself is not "religious." Questions to ask include:

- Are there people on our risers or in our audience who may have a different response to these themes? How sure are we that they would feel comfortable in speaking up about it?
- While including those themes in our regular repertoire welcomes those with the same religious views, what message do we send to those with differing views?
- What are some ways we can include everyone?

Religious music may not be present in regular repertoire, but many chapters have seasonal or religious holiday events. Keep in mind the repertoire for those events and the chorus participation requirements. There can be diversity in holiday performances, as well.

Choices for addressing **religious themes** include:

- Choose songs of community, peace, or spirituality with no reference to a higher power.
- Chose songs about/from different religions, but be careful about including songs with religious roots or origins in religions that are not represented in your chapter or immediate community.
- Change lyrics of repertoire songs if there are specific references to a higher power but the song is not otherwise religious.
- Limit the number of songs with religious themes.
- Avoid songs with religious themes.
- Add secular seasonal or holiday songs along with traditional seasonal/religious holiday songs.
- Celebrate religious holidays not commonly recognized (depending on the location of the chorus, this could mean Jewish holidays, Muslim holidays, Hindu holidays, etc.).

Other Considerations

While our awareness of and response to race, gender and religion will address many exclusionary songs or elements within songs, there can be other elements that we will want to pay attention to in considering our repertoires.

Songs that demean or are derogatory to groups of people based on other criteria can create an exclusionary environment as well. In general anything that diminishes or presents a group as inferior or less deserving is more likely to lead to feelings of exclusion or lack of belonging. Here are some examples of questions to ask when considering other potential exclusionary themes in songs:

- Visible physical differences – Does the song belittle others based on physical differences (e.g. portraying certain physical characteristics like weight or height as better or worse)?
- Age – Does the song reinforce stereotypes about age that are diminishing or make fun of challenges associated with any age group?
- Words that are associated with disabilities or conditions – Does the song use language that can be associated with a disability or condition in a dismissive or derogatory way (e.g. 'dumb', 'deaf', 'brain-dead')?
- Mistreatment or violence – Does the song reinforce demeaning stereotypes or promote or justify mistreatment or violence? (e.g. songs with elements of misogyny[3] or misandry[4])?

As we as individuals, an organization, and the societies we live in continue to evolve, language can change and words can take on new meanings or understandings, or we may understand their impact in a new way. The good news is we can always revisit and adjust our repertoire to address those changes.

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[3] Misogyny is defined as the hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women.
[4] Misandry is defined as the hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against men.

Barriers to Access:

Is our chorus addressing the different ways lack of accessibility excludes existing and potential members?

Lack of access is an obstacle to diversity and inclusivity. The most often-considered accessibility issues may be things we notice in public, such as accessible parking spots, ramps alongside stairs, and slopes in curbs. The initial physical access is an important consideration, especially when it comes to rehearsal spaces, but the barriers to full participation continue well beyond physical access to every facility used for all kinds of chorus events.

The cost of participating in barbershop music is an equally significant barrier to joining or continuing with a chorus. Through examining the cost of participation as a patron, the following is especially applicable to barbershop music participation for competitive choruses: "*Cost may be the biggest practical barrier for some groups — especially millennials, who, surveys show, typically overestimate ticket prices to arts events — though cost issues may also reflect deeper concerns about risking money on events they do not enjoy. Still, communicating actual ticket prices, and sometimes offering discounts, has helped pull in millennials. Such practical matters can play a large part in the individual decision making of potential patrons; reducing these barriers can yield measurable results.*" [Wallace Foundation](#).

Below are a few categories of accessibility that need to be considered by choruses:

Physical accessibility

When examining physical accessibility issues, here are some questions and suggestions.

- Is our rehearsal hall accessible to people with mobility issues? What about people who use wheelchairs?
- Do we consider different physical abilities in the warm-up routines, auditions, and music learning process or qualifications?
- When we develop choreography, do we design it to include our members with varied kinds of limited mobility? Do we make a conscious choice to include people with disabilities in choreography decisions and express those choices in a sensitive manner to members?
- Do we provide alternative options for people with disabilities who cannot rehearse for many hours in a row? Do we end our rehearsal at a very late hour, which may present challenges for people who may have difficulty traveling home at night or after a long rehearsal? Do we have a set rehearsal start and end time, but the chorus culture or expectations mean there are often obligations before and/or after scheduled rehearsal times?
- Does the chorus generally have enough understanding to be relaxed, understanding, and welcoming to participants with varied physical abilities?
- Do we provide opportunities and learning tools for people with a variety of abilities to participate fully in all aspects of rehearsal or performances (concerns apply to members and audiences)?
- Is our rehearsal hall in good condition; are there conditions that may cause health issues for some people, such as mold or dust?
- Do we provide learning tools that minimize visual challenges?

- Do we implement measures to minimize hearing impairment challenges?
- Is our chorus website accessible to all, meaning properly designed and coded for accurate rendering by visual assistive software on all the major platforms (PC, Mac, IOS, Android, and Linux)? Does the website render clearly with native adaptations for people with limited sight and color blindness?

Links to resources are provided below. Options for making the chorus accessible to members with disabilities might include:
- Develop a form and communicate the availability for members to provide discreet awareness of the need for accommodations.
- Provide or assist with the acquisition of physical riser aides. There are funding opportunities that seek to accommodate physical access to the arts. Though funding amounts and availability will vary depending on economic situations, many local arts organizations provide funding to support artists with disabilities and organizations enhancing arts and culture opportunities for people with disabilities. Search online for your local or regional arts organizations (keyword suggestion: include local/state/region, such as California or Wales, plus "arts council.")
- Inquire about accessibility when scheduling performances. Review this checklist for ideas: Ensuring your venues and events are open to all - A brief Access Guide
- Consider changes to the format/choreography to accommodate differing abilities. Develop a chorus policy for people with chronic medical conditions that may impact attendance (subject to the impact on performances and chorus goals).
- Develop alternative options for recording or coaching sessions for those who cannot attend due to chronic illness or disability.
- Consider alternative options for costumes and accessories that present obstacles for those with disabilities. (Examples: requirements for certain types of shoes, hairstyling, makeup, and restrictive costumes)
- Create an environment that allows for members to be open about hearing issues, and employ communication strategies, such as always speaking clearly and slowly and facing the person when speaking, to help members with some degree of hearing impairment. Also, to the extent possible, give additional consideration to members with hearing impairment by making riser placement choices that are supportive for those members.
- Review Website Accessibility for understanding of issues and potential solutions https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/ and consult with your provider.

Note: In the Judging Category Description Book, there are no impacts to scoring for anything a chorus does to manage accessibility for its members. You can make any adjustments you need to address any accessibility challenges for your singers and be confident that it will not impact scoring.

Financial Accessibility

Some cost components for participation in Sweet Adelines include:

- Chapter, Regional, and International Dues
- Performance and competition costumes, and planned makeup
- Non-stage clothing or make-up expectations that still identifies members as a group, such as a t-shirt, jacket, zip-hoodie, scarf, stick-on tattoo, hat, and more

- Cost associated with attendance at regional and international conventions and educational events
- Chapter social or educational events

In additional, there are indirect costs that may not be directly controlled by the organization, but which still have an impact on our members:

- Transportation to and from rehearsal
- Childcare costs
- Time away from work or missing out
- Diversion of funds from other opportunities (activities with family or friends who are not barbershop music participants)

Though some costs are fixed, chapters can make some choices to reduce the financial impact for potential and/or existing members. Chapters should also include information in their policies and informational packets for new members and monthly communications for existing members regarding the process for contacting leadership when financial constraints arise. Be sure to address confidentiality concerns.

Funding financial accessibility needs to comply with U.S. and Oklahoma law (because Sweet Adelines International is headquartered in Oklahoma, in the United States), as well as local jurisdictions. With that in mind, choices may include:

- Offer initial or temporary reductions in chapter dues and ticket prices.
- Develop a tiered dues structure for recent graduates who have aged past the youth member rate.
- Offer temporary reduced fees to potential new members (only charge the variable costs such as costumes, regional, and international fees). The amount and time period for these kinds of discounts varies with the circumstances of each chorus.
- Introduce a training phase that does not involve cost for an initial period to allow a potential member to save but keep them interested/connected. This might be in the form of a series of introductory sessions to the basic skills of singing generally and barbershop singing in particular. It may include one or more competition songs, or the skills may be developed on a general repertoire song. The series may or may not include singing in a public event, or in a family/friends performance segment on a rehearsal night.
- Consider a membership rate for unemployed members, those in full-time education, and those who are on a fixed income/retired.
- If your membership dues include registration and any other costs for convention, consider an Associate member rate for any singer who is not able to or does not wish to attend convention and compete.
- Reduce costs resulting from costumes and make-up requirements by paying attention to the purpose, longevity, and timeline of chorus costumes. Asking these questions can help you evaluate and determine if there are ways to reduce cost associated with costumes and make-up requirements.
  - How many costumes does the chorus have active at a time? How often are new costumes added or old ones retired?
  - Is each member expected to bear the cost of something new, either outright or through dues, or can costumes be put together from what already exists in most members' wardrobes?

- What accessories does our chorus mandate? Are there effective alternatives at a lower cost? Consider footwear, hosiery, undergarments, and jewelry costs.
- What possible new ways can our chorus gain maximum efficiency in member costs while meeting the visual impact and story-telling goals of song, set, and show? We can look for fresh ways to achieve planned changes, including repurposing retired costumes.
- How can we utilize drug store, supermarket, or online supplier makeup so that members can source their own within a set of criteria that match their budget?
- Continue to pursue our fundraising opportunities, including sponsorships from local businesses, local fundraising events for nonprofits (partnering with restaurants, thrift stores, etc.), and grants.
- If you are part of a US-based chorus, have members find out if their place of employment or a place they volunteer provides charitable giving or employee donation matches to arts nonprofits.
- Create chorus or individual financial support to be offered during particular hardships (often called Angel funds and chorus scholarships) to pay chorus expenses. There may be members with the financial means and desire to assist with dues or event costs for other members. Consult your tax laws to determine how much a chapter or members of a chapter can financially support other members.
- Look into registering as a charity in your country, which may be tax beneficial, enable the chorus to claim lower rates when offered on venues and other services, and open access to a greater range of potential grants.

Chorus Culture

Does your chapter culture contribute to a diverse and inclusive environment?

Are there differences in treatment or respect of chorus members based on age, religious or political affiliations, education levels, gender expression, or other ways in which we may differ? What are questions to ask when considering how these situations might be a barrier to creating a diverse and inclusive environment?

Awareness of these potential issues can come through periodic member surveys. It is worth keeping in mind how each chorus culture may affect different members' willingness to be fully forthright and clear. Each chorus should communicate and seek solutions based on findings and decisions on the culture it seeks to maintain or pursue.

- Ageism/differences in treatment or respect based on age:
    - Does the chorus tend to value the opinion of older members, particularly long-time older members, while dismissing ideas of new members, particularly younger members?
    - Is there an attitude of "this is the way we've always done it"?
    - Do younger members dismiss older members as having antiquated ideas or dismiss traditions just because they're based on longevity?

As the number of seasoned members (with significant longevity in Sweet Adelines) dwindles, having an understanding of potential generational differences could be valuable in resolving issues that hinder organizational survivability. Resources such as this Chorus Toolkit may assist with gaining an understanding of what needs to be addressed — such as a need to have

different targeted strategies for recruitment, participation, and audience reach, or framing/developing different performance opportunities, small group participations, or fee structures for different generations in membership (especially important for competitive choruses to help sustain revenue for those who no longer desire or are able to remain highly competitive).

Resources

[Creating Community Across Generations](#)

- Political Expression and Religious Activity:
  - Having politics or religion as part of a chorus culture can be inherently exclusionary. What constitutes politics? Do some members consider issues like discussion of race relations or LGBTQ+ status as political?
  - Does the chorus engage in political discussions during rehearsals or in group emails/social media, or avoid them?
  - Does the chorus engage in religious activity during rehearsal, such as praying or members proselytizing? Can members of minority religions (or of no religion) be respected and heard if they express discomfort with chorus-endorsed religious activities?
  - Does the chorus convey the image of having a religion in its marketing, social media, emails, and so on?
  - Looking at all the events and performances the chorus participates in, is there a large proportion of these that are at the behest of or support directly/indirectly a particular organized religion?
  - Does the chorus rehearse in a church or faith-based school? You may wish to consider alternative rehearsal space since the chorus may by association be viewed as religious or prospective members with alternative faiths or none and those who have been or are discriminated against by a religion may not feel comfortable in those spaces.

- Chorus Decisions – Degree of member participation:
  - What type of management structure does your chorus have/want? Does the chorus have opportunities to consider a different management structure (management team versus board)?
  - Do we want to create a chapter group/committee focused on DEI?
  - Who makes decisions about costumes/music/makeup/performances? How are those decisions made? (secret vote, consensus, majority, etc.)? Do individual chorus members have any input? Does your chorus seek input from members of different races/ethnicities, gender identities, religious background, etc., into decisions regarding costumes, makeup, or music selection?
  - Are the decision makers accessible to chorus members who may be uncomfortable with certain music/costumes/etc.?

- Uniformity Expectations:
  - Gender expression
  - Do we expect members to wear costumes that are stereotypical expressions of femininity? How extreme is that expression?

- - Do we expect members to wear makeup to portray stereotypical expressions of femininity?

"But increasingly choruses are learning that choral outfits divided into male and female categories may not accommodate all singers." (See Resource below, "Dressing Your Chorus."

- Body size
  - Are all our members reasonably comfortable in the fit of the costume?
  - Do we have variations in costume to accommodate people with different heights and body shapes?

Resources
Dressing Your Chorus
Making Your Chorus Welcoming for Transgender Singers

Engaging with Ever Greater Diversity of Groups

Does our chapter engage with diverse communities to reach inclusivity goals?

Among members in the barbershop community, one of the most often cited ways new members and audiences enter the world of barbershop is through friends and family. Maybe you are familiar with these phrases: Barber Brat, Cradle Barbershopper, Generational Barbershop Family. These are wonderful descriptions, but barbershop history cannot continue to exclude racially/ethnically diverse populations who were essential to its precursors and pre-organization history. Consequently, if diversity and inclusivity are to play a role in expanding our chapter's membership and audiences, here are a few questions to consider:

- Does our chorus advertising or social media target outlets to reach diverse populations?
- Is our chorus ready to welcome new singers who are still learning local English and may be confused by some of our barbershop 'slang' and jargon?
- Are we ready to schedule coaching and shows around a broader variety of sacred holidays?
- Does our chorus perform community outreach activities that can bring awareness of its existence to diverse populations?
- Does our chorus bring in artists who don't look and sound like us for shows and share a song or two with them? Do we participate in diverse community events to make new friends and introduce barbershop to new audiences?

The above activities are actions some arts organizations, including barbershop chapters, have taken to expand and live out their commitment to diversity and inclusivity. The suggestions below are ways to implement a program of expanding your reach to diverse populations.

- Develop outreach through the Young Women in Harmony (YWIH) Program (or create new programs) to reach a more diverse youth group and potentially new audiences. (See flyer of Metro Nashville's YWIH event show in Appendix A).

- Structure co-performance opportunities with diverse artists. (See flyers of Toast of Tampa's show and Rich-Tones' show in Appendix A).
- Collaborate with organizations that represent diverse populations.
- Create a low-cost and attractive pricing structure for membership and performances.
- Offer free concerts and promote "send-off" shows (which are usually donation-only) to diverse groups.
- Perform in different/non-traditional venues to completely change the settings in which barbershop music is typically heard.
- Bring innovation and diversity to performances (For example, Chicago Sinfonietta embedded a tap dancer into Stravinsky´s Firebird Suite, flamenco dancers into Rimsky-Korsakov´s Scheherazade, and gospel music into a tribute to the U.S. Armed Forces; the organization also created "original work that invited concertgoers to turn on their cell phones").
- Embrace the diversity in music by singing and performing a varied repertoire of music. (Ensure this diversity is evident in the promotional materials.)
- Examine and address issues in repertoire and marketing efforts that impede the inclusion process.

Appendix A Event Flyer Examples

Metro Nashville Chorus, YWISH - Young Women in Song & Harmony, November 17, 2019
"We were lucky to have a connection at a high school with a very diverse demographic. We changed the performance to a free admission with optional donation to encourage more families and friends to come see the show."