

RWCC Membership Handbook



Mission Statement:

The Rochester Women's Community Chorus provides a creative and safe environment for women of various levels of musical expertise to sing together. The chorus embraces women of many cultural and ethnic backgrounds, life experiences and sexual orientations. The RWCC is dedicated to using music as the vehicle for messages of peace, hope, understanding, and cooperation within the global community. While all singing members are women, both men and women who wish to join the RWCC family are welcomed in non-singing roles.

History:

RWCC began in 1978 as Rochester Womyn's Community Chorus. Its philosophy at that time was to provide a vehicle for the feminist community through singing. The directors for the next five years were professional musicians and the chorus sang only music composed by women. In 1999, the RWCC became a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and established a Board of Directors, in whose hands the fiscal responsibilities, planning, and major decisions are entrusted.

Current:

The RWCC is a medium sized organization that takes pride in the quality of its performances. There are two major concerts a year and one or two "run-outs" or smaller performances. All singers are expected to sing in the major concerts, while "run-outs" are based on singers' availability.

Dates of major performances are announced at the beginning of each season. If there is a conflict with a date, it is important that the Director be notified of this immediately so that adjustments can be made if needed.

Chorus Structure:

Board of Directors & Committees:

The RWCC is run by a board of directors elected annually. However, each member of the chorus can influence chorus activities by joining one or more of the standing or ad hoc committees. These committees are responsible for aspects of the RWCC including music selection, performance enhancement, concert production, rehearsal retreat planning, fund- raising, membership recruitment, and website/publications design. New committees may be formed at any time as needed.

We are a volunteer organization. Therefore, it is important for our singing members in the RWCC to take part in at least one committee or volunteer for one non-singing assignment per season. (New members are asked to join a committee in their second season with RWCC).

Section Leaders:

Each section of the chorus (Soprano I and II, Alto I and II), has a designated volunteer or volunteers who act(s) as Section Leader. These women are the chorus members' link to other members, other sections, the Board, and the Director. If there are musical or other problems within a section that come up from week to week, the Section Leader will communicate the concerns to the Director or an appropriate board member or committee chair. They will also help address attendance issues within their section.

An updated copy of the roster is distributed to all singers upon the closing of new member recruitment, after the first month of each season. Section leaders will make sure that each member of their section receives one.

Membership Requirements and Expectations:

We are a non-auditioned group open to every woman who would like to sing. It is understood that everyone has different skills and learning styles. The ability to read music is not

necessary. There is a voice placement for each new member of the chorus, and periodically for existing members, to help determine balance and voice part. Anyone who cannot match a musical pitch will be encouraged to work individually with the Director to improve their vocal skills prior to singing in the chorus. They will also be encouraged to be a part of the group by participating in one of the many necessary non-singing tasks.

Each singer is provided with her own copy of the music at the beginning of each season. This music is on loan from the RWCC Music Library and we ask that it be kept in good condition so that others may use it in the years to follow. It is strongly encouraged that all music be memorized for the concert performance.

Dues:

Since we are a not-for-profit organization, dues and ticket sales make up the bulk of our funds. All singing and non-singing members of the RWCC are expected to pay dues each season (twice a year). Recommended dues are discussed with chorus members at the beginning of each season and range from \$50-90. No one will be denied participation in any chorus event because of an inability to pay dues. Members who have difficulty with the financial requirement should speak to the Treasurer.

Members will also be encouraged to help raise funds through various fund-raising events, helping to sell advertisements or to solicit patrons for the concert programs, and selling tickets for RWCC concerts.

Rehearsal Structure:

Rehearsals are held on weekday evenings (currently Tuesdays) from September-December/January for the winter semester and January-June for the spring semester. They begin at 6:30 PM and last until 8:45 PM, with a short break. During rehearsal, the focus is on singing, learning parts and lyrics. Socializing, eating, or other activities, including those related to committee work, should be addressed during breaks or outside of scheduled rehearsal time. Rehearsal tracks or CDs are available to all chorus members.

Each season, there will be a RWCC retreat – an additional chorus rehearsal and social event scheduled on a weekend towards the middle of the season. Dates will be provided as early in the season as possible to allow time for planning.

Snoopy Club:

There is a Snoopy Club which is responsible for acknowledging celebratory events and times of hardship for individual members, including non- singing members. Social events are periodically planned for the chorus, and everyone is invited to bring guests to these functions.

Inclement Weather/Emergency Contacts:

Occasionally, a rehearsal may be canceled if the rehearsal space is closed. When that is the case, a message will be emailed to all Chorus Members and will be posted on the 'Inside the RWCC' Facebook page by 4:30 PM the day of rehearsal. In addition Section Leaders will be notified. If there is a reason to expect that the rehearsal might be canceled, members are asked to review their emails, telephone either their section leaders or visit 'Inside the RWCC' on the day of rehearsal to ascertain whether rehearsal will be held.

Alcohol & Drug Policy

Any alcohol consumption or use of illegal drugs at chorus sanctioned events (e.g., rehearsals, performances, retreats, potlucks) is prohibited.

CODE OF COURTESY

1. Please be respectful of your neighbors and limit distractions.
 - Limit talking and use whispered voices.
 - Limit your use of electronic devices (cell phones, mp3 players, tablets, kindles, etc.). Be present in the room with us.

2. Please help your child to not be a distraction to others.
 - Children who become a distraction make it difficult for us to improve.
 - If your child becomes a distraction, we will discuss alternate solutions with you during or after rehearsal.
 - Children who continue to be a distraction may be asked to not return to rehearsal.

3. Participate with enthusiasm
 - Be ready to sing when it's your turn.
 - Be committed to self-improvement as well as the improvement of the chorus.
 - Leave negative attitudes and comments outside the door.

4. Please keep our rehearsal space a "Fragrance Free Zone"
 - Please do not wear perfume, cologne, lotions, hairspray with odor, or aftershave at rehearsals, concerts, or other performances.
 - This is a safety concern. Many of our members suffer from allergies and your fragrance might cause an allergic or asthmatic reaction.
 - Members wearing any fragrance may be asked to go to the bathroom and wash it off or to leave rehearsal for the evening.

5. Please address conflicts or concerns in an appropriate manner.
 - If you have a conflict with or a concern about another member, please speak to your section leader or a board member.
 - If you have a conflict with or a concern about the church or its staff, please speak to a board member.

Attendance Policy

1. Attendance at every regularly scheduled, Tuesday night rehearsal (6:30-8:45 pm) is expected of all RWCC singers. Attendance is important for individual preparation for our concert, to ensure group cohesion, and to build and sustain our RWCC community.
2. A full calendar of rehearsals (regular, retreat, & tech) is provided at the beginning of the season and reminders will be sent throughout the season. Please plan accordingly.
3. Attendance will be tracked by the Member Manager who will quietly take attendance at the beginning of each rehearsal. If you are late to rehearsal, make sure you speak with the Member Manager so that you are not marked absent for that rehearsal.
4. If you know you need to be absent from a regular rehearsal, inform the Member Manager as soon as possible via email, phone call, or text. Please DO NOT use any other methods (such as Facebook or contacting your Section Leader and/or the Music Director) to inform the her of your absence.
5. All missed rehearsals, for any reason, will be recorded as an absence.
6. If you leave early or come late to rehearsal and you miss more than half of the rehearsal, you will be marked absent for that evening.
7. The consequences for missing regular rehearsals are as follows:
 - After 3 Missed Rehearsals - You will receive an email from the Member Manager to discuss your attendance and any other anticipated future absences. Talk to your Section Leader and/or the Music Director about strategies to help you catch up including use of a practice cd, sectional rehearsals, small group rehearsals, or one-on-one “buddy” rehearsals.

- After 5 Missed Rehearsals - Your Section Leader (and/or a Music Director designated alternative) will be asked to sit next to you during a regular rehearsal to share information from missed rehearsals and to provide feedback on your current readiness for the concert to the Music Director. You and your Section Leader/other designee will receive an email with details and guidance on what to do in this situation.
 - After 7 Missed Rehearsals - It will be assumed you are not planning to perform at the concert and an email will be sent to you stating that. However, in this case, we ask that you please consider taking on a non-performing role at the concert and coming back next season. You may appeal this decision directly to the Music Director who will conduct a solo part check and will decide if you are concert-ready.
8. Attendance of all members in the later stages of the season is critical to the success and smooth performance of each concert:
- All absences from any rehearsal in the 3 weeks leading up to the concert must be discussed immediately with the Music Director who will determine if your absences require any additional steps be taken to make sure you are prepared for the concert. It is possible that you may be asked to not perform at the concert in this situation.
 - Absences from BOTH technical rehearsals (i.e. rehearsals that take place in the performance space) will result in you being asked to not perform at the concert. This will also apply for lack of notification of any absence from tech rehearsals. In case of emergency, 24 hours before or after the rehearsal will be deemed sufficient notification.
 - Soloists and small group singers are required to do a sound check with the microphones and sound technician that will be present at one of the technical rehearsals. If soloists or small groups are not present for their sound check, they may be asked not participate in their solo/group performance. All soloists and small groups will be notified in advance of the date of the tech rehearsal that will include their sound check

Please note that any member absences **will be recorded** by the Member Manager and **will be addressed** by the Member Manager, Section Leaders, and the Music Director. Please rest assured that absences are taken very seriously and the same process applies to EVERYONE – even if you do not personally witness any actions taking place.

Who we are

Our chorus family consists of a diverse group of women who share their love of music. We welcome everyone to join our extended family as part of our chorus, as a volunteer, or by attending our concerts.

As members of [GALA](#), [Sister Singers](#), and the [Greater Rochester Choral Consortium](#), organizations that bring together hundreds of choruses worldwide, we promote building bridges through music.

Contact Us

We rehearse at:

Downtown United Presbyterian Church

121 N Fitzhugh St., Ste. 314

Rochester, NY 14614

Phone: 585-234-4441

Web: <http://www.therwcc.org>



ROCHESTER WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CHORUS

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Rochester, NY 14614