



SingUnited
INTERNATIONAL

Youth Guide for Chapters

*Please note that the SingUnited Youth Outreach program is **NOT** to be considered a recruitment tool. However, should your outreach be successful in establishing youth interested in becoming members, then this resource may be beneficial to your chorus director, so that your chorus may create an environment where youth feel welcome and accepted. This content was originally created in 2017 with the intention of providing valuable insights, guidance, and relevant information. While much of the content remains rooted in enduring principles, it is important to note that some of the data, examples, and recommendations may no longer be relevant. Therefore, you are encouraged to seek out additional resources as needed.*

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Forword

A youth outreach program is an investment in our future. SingUnited International hopes to reach young singers throughout the world by introducing them to the American art form of barbershop harmony. This handbook can be used as a toolkit specifically for your advancement in youth outreach by using our guiding principles:

Musical Excellence: We honor and embrace artistry, education and innovation in the performance of women's a cappella music while championing the barbershop style.

Culture of Belonging: We create harmony where every voice matters. We foster a culture that provides a joyful place to share our uniqueness within a global community united in song.

Diversity & Inclusion: We celebrate our differences as essential to the rich harmony that unites us. As we recognize barbershop's African American origins and learn from our exclusionary past toward women of color, we reject discrimination and unwaveringly strive toward greater awareness, openness and understanding of each other.

Personal Empowerment & Leadership: We encourage and empower everyone to lead from where they stand. We foster individual skills, nurture personal growth, and provide education and mentoring to develop strong, effective leaders on and off the stage.

Outreach: We build strong connections by sharing our love of barbershop harmony throughout our communities, countries and the world.

SingUnited recommends that you have dedicated and knowledgeable members in your Youth Outreach Program. Below are some topics and ideas these people should be familiar with:

- ❖ Designing and carrying out plans to expose youth to barbershop in their region.
- ❖ Can plan and carry out festivals, workshops, and contests.
- ❖ Promotes the International Rising Star Contest
- ❖ Work closely with their Regional Management Team
- ❖ Knowledge of other educational music organizations like The National Association for Music Education, The American Choral Directors Association, the International Society of Music Educators, and Barbershop Harmony Society

An Investment in the Future

The introduction to music educators of four-part harmony in barbershop style is presented in the hope that they will teach students about and encourage students to sing barbershop harmony. It is hoped that this style of music will be included as part of every school's music curriculum.

The program is aimed at young singers aged 25 and under and their educators. Its aim is to encourage them to use barbershop music within their existing choral groups, to add new performing ensembles in this style to their curriculum offerings or as an extracurricular activity and to assist youth quartets. We must emphasize the benefits it can have for the school program in increased music resources for the educator, in the enthusiasm it can generate with the students, and in the development of students' ear training and vocal skills.

The approach to a music educator by a SingUnited member needs to be well planned. Remember that music educators are very busy people. In addition to a heavy class schedule, they must dedicate most evenings to rehearsals, provide music for concerts, sporting events, community activities and school assemblies. They are not looking for more work and responsibility. However, they are looking for new resources, ways to involve and interest students in a broad variety of music and ways to develop and showcase their students' talent. If we are to involve educators and their students in this program, we must be willing to take the initiative and be available as a resource, without diminishing what the program is already offering.

NON-RECRUITMENT POLICY

A youth outreach program is not a recruitment program and young women should be invited to participate without solicitation for membership. Workshops, festivals, and competitions are meant to introduce young singers to the fun of singing four-part harmony in the barbershop style and may serve to create future interest in membership. Although this program is not designed to promote membership, as a chorus reaches out to its community, young ladies under the age of 18 may request to become members. These young members can present many challenges within a chorus, and it is important that the Chorus' Board of Directors or Management Team address these issues and develop a policy regarding youth members prior to accepting members under the age of 18.

If a chorus chooses to require its members to be 18 before joining, it is a good idea to be candid about this requirement so that uncomfortable situations are avoided. That said, this requirement should not discourage a chorus from introducing our art form to younger audiences. Mothers, aunts, teachers, etc. often accompany young ladies to these events and those adult women may become interested in joining the organization because of youth outreach activities in the community.

Chapter Involvement

Several steps should be taken BEFORE you embark on launching a youth outreach program.

1. Determine the extent of your chapter's commitment to the program by thoroughly discussing the subject with administrative leaders and the music team. Carefully consider your financial, logistical and volunteer resources.
2. Select activities that seem most appropriate to your situation. According to the different talents in individual chapters, some things will be done more than others. This is also true of the school(s) with which you are working. Remember that follow-through is imperative once you have made a commitment to a particular activity.

If there is a flourishing vocal music curriculum with several young singers involved, then certain activities would be appropriate. However, if the music department is small or there is a need to encourage more participation and enthusiasm, then other options should be offered. Each chorus must be aware of its own capability to participate or assist, while remaining sensitive to the priorities and responsibilities of the music educator involved.

THE INITIAL CONTACT

Depending upon the size or structure of the school district, it may be appropriate to make initial contact with the person in the district office who oversees music curriculum for the entire school district. If this is the case, the music administrator or superintendent would be the one to provide names of individual music educators at each grade level in the schools of that district. If the school district is small, simply call the school office and ask to speak to the vocal music teacher. Whether through an administrator or the school office, you will make direct contact with vocal music teachers in junior and senior high schools. If there is a local community college or university in your city or town, it may also be appropriate to contact the music department or school of music at those institutions as well.

Please keep several of the following in mind:

- ❖ Order a free Music Educator Kit from International Headquarters for each music instructor who is interested. Have it sent directly to them at their schools so that their names will be added to the email list to receive all youth/Rising Star related notifications.
- ❖ If the teacher appears disinterested, please do not press the issue. Leave materials and your name, e-mail address and phone number. The instructor may decide to look it over later and may wish to learn more about the program in the future.

ASSOCIATION WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

To begin association with local schools, consider these possibilities:

- ❖ Provide music for the vocal director and the students. International Headquarters provides many single-copy sheet music arranged for young women's voices for free. Although some initial materials are complimentary, the chapter will need to approve expenses for additional items donated to the educators.
- ❖ Use a quartet for demonstration in the class. Most schools welcome outside speakers or performers, so this is an excellent way to expose the students to the barbershop style. Be cautious, however, not to send just any four women to do this. If you have good, registered quartets, use them (ones with youthful appeal are best) and take care in selecting music that will appeal to young women.

- ❖ The chapter might perform a package show for a school assembly using the full chorus and/or quartets. This could be followed by presentations in individual music classrooms. Music must be appropriate for the audience's grade level.
- ❖ Give the vocal director and students free tickets for a chapter show. If the show is being held at their school auditorium, some of the youth act as ushers, stagehands, etc. Being part of the act builds enthusiasm for the program.
- ❖ Hold an open house. Invite the director and students to a special rehearsal. Parents could also receive an invitation. Set up the meeting following guidelines for a regular guest night. If the school has a youth performance group, encourage them to sing. If it is an outstanding group, they could even be invited to appear on the annual chapter show.
- ❖ Sponsor a festival. Remember that there are financial and participatory obligations that the chapter must be ready to assume if this activity is selected. If you wish to pursue this option, we suggest utilizing the [Youth Festival Planning Guide](#). There are several funding options for a festival.
- ❖ The chapter may choose to donate a trophy, a plaque or a music scholarship honoring, for example, an outstanding vocalist or most inspirational musician or whatever the chapter may choose. It could be presented annually at the school's awards assembly. This is an excellent way to underscore the local chapter's commitment to music education.

Your involvement with local music educators is not limited by the activities listed here. Please contact the [Education Department](#) at International Headquarters for additional information and resources. Let them know about your successes and plans.

WORKING WITH THE REGION

Within each region of SingUnited, the Education Coordinator (ED) would be responsible for planning any regional based youth outreach program or activities, including all regional workshops, festivals and events. The ED works to prepare and present a proposed budget to the Regional Management Team (RMTs), and reports all regionally supporting youth outreach activities to the RMT.

A youth outreach program should be flexible, so that it may fit the unique needs of each region. The RMT and the ED in each region can decide the direction of their regional youth outreach program. They can use the financial assets and available talent pool to steer the direction of the program, considering the needs and wishes of the membership. Some regions may choose to sponsor youth festivals annually. Some may have a youth or Rising Star Quartet Contest each year and fund the winner to the International Rising Star competition. Some regions might use the program only through choruses as an outreach tool for music educators in their community or via sponsorship of trade show booths at educator conventions such as those hosted by NAFME or ACDA. Other choruses may become involved in sponsoring festivals and including young singers in their performances.

In working with the ED and the RMT, remember to be a good communicator and work with a positive attitude towards teamwork.

ISSUES TO REMEMBER:

- ❖ The RMT has the burden of fiscal management and must hold as a priority the needs of the membership in the region.
- ❖ In that the future of the organization depends upon future members, the RMT should strive to develop financial support for youth outreach without detrimentally impacting the programs of its dues paying membership. The RMT should aim to ensure that young singers in their area are exposed to our art form in a positive and inviting way. Creative fundraising for this educational effort is encouraged and there are many resources available to assist with offsetting the cost of sponsoring youth outreach activities at the regional and chapter level.

WORKING WITH CHORUSES

To reach as many young singers as possible in the effort to expose them to the fun and challenge of barbershop music, it is necessary to involve choruses. Our goal is that, someday, each chorus in the region will sponsor one or more youth outreach activity each year. These can range from inviting young singers to participate during a performance to hosting a one-day festival or initiating an ongoing program as part of the curriculum in conjunction with local educators.

The Youth Outreach Resources outline many of the possibilities and offers instruction in all aspects of creating youth outreach, including sample letters and templates, as well as all necessary forms. It also offers invaluable help in establishing a youth outreach program. With this resource, your chorus is bound to be successful in establishing and maintaining a program of outreach to young singers.

There are many possible options for choruses to consider and explore. The following activities have been used successfully by many chapters and regions:

- ❖ One-hour classroom presentation in local schools (elementary through college)
- ❖ One-half hour demo-performance (elementary through college)
- ❖ Music After Five (after-school program for elementary through high school aged singers)
- ❖ Barbershop harmony as an extracurricular activity/club (ideally suited to high schools and colleges)
- ❖ Local youth chorus

School District Level:

- ❖ Presentation for music educators
- ❖ Class presentation during school day for students

City/County Area Schools:

- ❖ Half-day festival
- ❖ Full-day festival
- ❖ Chapter open house
- ❖ Chapter show tickets
- ❖ Joint rehearsals/chapter and school
- ❖ Quartet competitions
- ❖ City/County youth chorus

Statewide:

- ❖ Presentation at state music educators meeting (ACDA and NAFME State Conferences, etc.)
- ❖ Booth at appropriate teachers' meetings (ACDA and NAFME State Conferences, etc.)
- ❖ All-state barbershop festivals (can be in conjunction with BHS, if desired)
- ❖ Exchange concerts - multi-school
- ❖ Quartet competitions

Regional Level:

- ❖ Regional Youth Outreach Program Activities or Festivals
- ❖ Invitations to music schools and/or shows
- ❖ Presentation at regional music educators meeting (ACDA and NAFME Regional Conferences, etc.)
- ❖ Booth at appropriate teachers' meetings (ACDA and NAFME Regional Conferences, etc.)
- ❖ Music camp presentations
- ❖ Harmony Camps (can be in conjunction with BHS, if desired)
- ❖ Coaching opportunities at regional events
- ❖ Quartet competitions
- ❖ Regional Youth Chorus

International or National Level:

- ❖ Rising Star Quartet Competition

Determining what level of youth outreach participation, if any, will most benefit their chorus is critical. Whether the chorus is planning a festival or just accepting a young member into its ranks, many questions and concerns may arise. Advance knowledge of the Frequently Asked Questions listed at the end of this handbook should assist in answering many of these questions. [The International website](#) can also be of great assistance.

It is also important to recognize that each chorus is different. Although outreach is important to the organization as a whole, not every chorus is going to be open to working with or accepting young women as members of their chapter. Each chorus must be allowed to make its own decision regarding youth outreach.

To motivate SingUnited International members to support a youth outreach program, an understanding of various types of members is required. Some will enthusiastically embrace all youth outreach activities and will work diligently to bring opportunities to the youth in their community. Others may be interested but not sure how to get started. And some might not feel that youth outreach is important to them or their chorus and may even be reticent to embrace youth outreach.

How do you reach out to such diverse mix of individuals? They are drastically different in terms of attitude, understanding, ability, and confidence. The answer to that is more simplistic than one would assume. Don't focus on those differences. How can interest, understanding and education about youth outreach be increased? You lead by example. Design "lessons" for our choruses and members through both education and motivation.

Education

Make sure everyone involved fully understands the mission and benefits. You may contact International Headquarters regarding any shared youth outreach program activities and updates.

Motivation

Acknowledge directors, choruses, and members that demonstrate outstanding work and dedication to youth outreach. Feature chapters that have been successfully organizing youth events in things like your regional newsletters and on the regional website.

Lead by example

Continue to be committed to youth outreach activities in your region. Make these activities and events highly visible to members and encourage expanded participation, at any level, throughout the region. Be a resource for those who wish to host their own festivals, provide quartets for your Rising Star contest, and introduce barbershop harmony to local educators.

Hosting Festivals

Many choruses are interested in hosting festivals to introduce local youth and their families to our unique style of music. Please see the section regarding festivals for more information about these types of events.

Rising Star Contest

The Rising Star Contest is open to quartets whose members are all aged 25 and under. Additional information, including registration forms, is available on the SUI website. Many regions host an annual Rising Star Contest and offer to sponsor or assist the winning quartet from their region to compete in the international contest. In addition, chapters might host a youth quartet contest in conjunction with an upcoming show in the community to generate interest in barbershop harmony and increase their audience base.

Regional Youth Outreach Events

Many regions host youth outreach events during their regional competitions and regional educational weekends. These functions can include anything from pizza parties to youth chorus festivals and quartet contests.

Assimilating Younger members

Although youth outreach cannot be considered a recruiting tool, many choruses throughout the organization are welcoming members in their teens and early twenties. There are many issues to consider in the ability of our typical Sweet Adeline Chorus to assimilate young members.

Younger members will feel a desire to participate if:

- ❖ The repertoire appeals to them
- ❖ The chorus image appeals to them
- ❖ The chorus members are friendly and fun
- ❖ Activity in the chorus is affordable and fits their time schedule

It is true that many of our established choruses are NOT looking to assimilate younger singers into their ranks. They may feel that they don't want to "chaperone" young people and some may feel threatened by younger singers who may "take over the front row" or make major changes in the chorus "culture" by wanting to dress or sing in a different way. Studies show that if a young man first enters an older men's chorus, he is welcomed, because he makes them all feel young. However, when a young woman visits an adult women's chorus, some of the members feel OLD by comparison. This can lead to a less welcoming approach to young singers. Sometimes women enjoy their chorus because it is an adult environment and they are not interested in "mothering" away from home. One suggestion to ease the transition to welcoming young singers is for the chorus to have a quality rookie program in place that addresses the needs of rookies of all ages.

Most choruses have an established tradition, a "culture" that's difficult to change to be more appealing to youth and therefore be accepting of younger women. If we are to continue to grow as an organization in the future, it is necessary that we find the right balance to reach out to younger women — to find ways to appeal to them and to accept them.

Each chorus has its own age limits as written in its standing rules. Some choruses require their members under 18 to have a sponsor who supervises the young woman, especially in travel situations. International dues are offered at a reduced rate for members under 26 years old and many chapters also have reduced chapter fees for girls of student age.

Choruses that are successful in assimilating young members often start by including their members' daughters and granddaughters. Many times, younger girls are interested in membership if there are already one or two girls their age in the chorus. If a chorus wishes to have a membership drive aimed at younger women, it may be more successful if a group of youths is invited rather than just a single individual.

You can assist choruses in her region in reaching out to younger singers by educating chapters about these issues and by communicating with the chorus leadership concerning their interest in including younger members in their choruses.

WORKING WITH EDUCATORS

The introduction to music educators of four-part a cappella harmony in the barbershop style is presented in the hope that they will teach students about and encourage students to sing barbershop harmony. It is hoped that this style of uniquely American music will be included as part of every school's music curriculum.

The program is aimed at singers aged 25 and under and their educators. Its aim is to encourage them to use barbershop music within their existing choral groups, to add new performing ensembles in this style to their curriculum offerings or as an extracurricular activity and to assist youth quartets. We must emphasize the benefits it can have for the school program in increased music resources for the educator, in the enthusiasm it can generate with the students, and in the development of students' ear training and vocal skills.

The approach to a music educator by a SingUnited International member needs to be well planned. *Remember that music educators are very busy people.* In addition to a heavy class schedule, they must dedicate most evenings to rehearsals, provide music for concerts, sporting events, community activities and school assemblies. They are not looking for more work and responsibility. However, they **are** looking for new resources, ways to involve and interest students in a broad variety of music and ways to develop and showcase their students' talent. If we are to involve educators and their students in this program, we must be willing to take the initiative and be available as a resource, without diminishing what the program is already offering.

It is our goal to promote barbershop harmony and increase awareness of the programs and opportunities available to young singers. To encourage more involvement and utilization of barbershop harmony within high schools and middle schools, colleges and universities, an understanding of music education in the schools is required.

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME AND CONSIDER

High Schools/Middle Schools

Music educators are concerned with reaching the state and country-wide standards set forth for music education. Often, they do not consider four-part harmony in the barbershop style as part of the curriculum for several reasons:

Lack of Visibility in Community and Society

Most educators don't realize there are SingUnited International and BHS chapters within miles of their schools and homes.

Lack of Understanding

Barbershop harmony was never mentioned during their college careers. It was not discussed in any music history classes. In the minds of the educator, if barbershop harmony is important, why wasn't it mentioned at some point in their education?

Lack of Time

Music teachers hit the ground running each school year. Adjudicated events, concerts, fundraisers, and daily lessons combine for a very full schedule. For educators to be willing to add something additional to their already demanding schedule, the ease at which it is accomplished is a factor. Providing good information about available programs is essential. Educators cannot be expected to spend much time navigating websites to find their desired information.

Lack of Quality Contact

Some educators have been approached about the prospect of adding barbershop harmony into their curriculum but were turned off or unimpressed by that contact.

Paper Overload

Teachers receive reams and reams of letters, catalogs, flyers, and brochures. Rarely is something opened if it does not look impressive or is not recognized. Most end up in the trash, or in a pile of things that they will look at "when I get the time."

Non-academic Approach

If these educators are approached by someone that is unable to "walk the walk" and "talk the talk" they will close themselves to the idea of any type of participation or promotion. Therefore, it is essential that those who make contact with these educators are musically literate, have a working knowledge of the individual school system and its program, and are able to answer any and all questions that the educator may have regarding the activities that are being promoted.

University/College

The duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the individual institutions are once again a factor. Most music departments or schools have a "personality." They are known as an "opera school," "musical theatre," "music education," or "jazz school." They are concerned with maintaining that personality and do not always see any room for including barbershop harmony in their curriculum.

These educators have the same struggles, concerns, or factors as their Middle School/High School counterparts. In addition, there also may be issues with:

Lack of funding

Being made aware of both regional and international scholarship and grant opportunities will make an impression.

Lack of rigor

Some professors of music may have the perception that four-part barbershop harmony is not serious enough for challenging the academic rigors of their music majors. When approaching teachers of higher education, it is important to present them with arrangements that possess some musical difficulty while remaining appropriate for the vocal ranges of collegiate singers.

Building Community Relationships

Visibility is vital for successful promotion of the art of barbershop harmony in our communities. Keep in mind that quality must go hand in hand with visibility. Choruses and quartets, both adult and youth-based need to continue efforts to perform at local festivals, holiday celebrations and sporting events. One never hears, “Oh, it’s too bad there was that barbershop group singing at the (insert event here).” On the contrary, community members of all ages are usually quite thrilled. The community glows and gushes over how awesome they sound and often even elicits the familiar reply, “My mother was a Sweet Adeline.” One just can’t help but smile when they hear barbershop harmony.

Awareness can be built via community service. By becoming an ongoing participant in local events, you can raise more support. Try to take that participation a step further by organizing an annual charity or service event. A holiday food drive, neighborhood spruce-up or craft bazaar sponsored by the chorus or quartet would be a welcome addition to a community calendar. Offer to fundraise for local schools. Not only would awareness be raised, but it would also be a great way to “grease the wheel” in regard to accessing the music educators in those schools.

EXHIBIT BOOTHS AT MUSIC EDUCATOR SHOWS

Many states host state music conferences and festivals that are attended by music educators as well as junior and senior high school and college students. These conferences can be an exciting and fun way to introduce SingUnited International to the top musicians in the state.

Exhibit booths can be rented during the convention’s trade show. This is a wonderful way to introduce SingUnited and your youth outreach program to music educators and their students.

A few suggestions for the exhibit booth include:

- ❖ Displaying photos from local festivals. The students will be excited to see themselves. (This takes a little preplanning at the time of the festival, including a photo release included in the permission slips from parents to use the student’s photos).
- ❖ Asking a high-scoring and youthful quartet to sing at the booth.
- ❖ Bring copies of short, easy tags, with the different parts highlighted. Most of these musicians can sight read. Get them into the booth to sing a tag. It’s amazing how they will multiply!
- ❖ Preparing lists of where each chorus is located in the state. This may include more than just your region, but since there is only one state conference it’s nice to work together.
- ❖ If your state does cover more than one region, contact the RYC from the other region(s) and work together. This is also a wonderful opportunity to work with the Barbershop Harmony Society. Often BHS will share the booth rental costs and co-host the exhibit or coordinate to host booths next to the SingUnited booth.
- ❖ If a quartet is not available, videos from Rising Star, Regional contest, or international contest could be played during the trade show.
- ❖ Exhibiting at trade shows can make for very long days. If allowed, organize a schedule where different volunteers rotate hosting the booth every couple of hours. First impressions are everything, so it is crucial that each volunteer is capable of accurately answering questions.

CHORUS SPONSORED FESTIVALS, CAMPS, AND WORKSHOPS

Throughout the regions of SingUnited International, choruses have begun to hold festivals, camps, and workshops to introduce youth to the art form of barbershop harmony. It is important that you understand these events and the ability to assist in answering questions when they arise.

Much of the information needed to organize one of these events is available from the International website www.singunited.org, under the Education tab.

No matter what form of event is being planned; the following questions should be answered first.

Who will be in charge and responsible for the planning?

The person (or persons) chosen to be in charge needs to be well organized, able to delegate responsibilities and willing to make decisions when necessary. This person should be passionate about SingUnited and willing to work with youth.

What type of event is to be held?

This is probably the most important question. Events can be just for a couple of hours or last for several days. As the time commitment expands, so do the responsibilities and costs. The number of adults willing to help with the event should play a large role in making this decision.

When should the event be held?

Once the type of event is determined a date must be chosen. Again, many factors will come into consideration. However, one item that is often overlooked when planning an event that will be attended by high school students is the school examination and testing schedule. Holding a festival just before or during final exams will make it very difficult for students to attend. In addition, it is wise to consider the social functions planned during the school year such as athletic events and dances and avoid planning a youth outreach event for the same time frame. Finally, you'll want to review other youth activities in the community such as youth chorus auditions or competitions, cheerleading events, dance recitals, graduations, cotillions, etc. that may conflict with your proposed dates.

What is the budget for this event?

Setting a budget prior to the event is extremely important. It provides the planner with a guide of what can and cannot be accomplished.

Where will the funding come from?

If the event is small with little or no cost, a chorus may choose to cover the expenses from the chorus treasury. However, for larger festivals and camps the costs are too great for most groups to absorb. Funding is available from many different sources, but it takes organization and perseverance to obtain these funds.

A few options include:

- ❖ Grants, a major funding source for these types of events, often require applications to be submitted up to a year in advance. Grants are available from a variety of sources including local and/or state art councils as well as charitable organizations. SingUnited itself provides grant funding for youth outreach events. Deadline dates and eligibility requirements may be found on the SUI website:
- ❖ Donations from local establishments.
- ❖ Charging a fee for participation. Depending upon the time frame of the event, these charges can be a few dollars for half-day workshop or several hundred dollars for a week-long camp. If you choose this option for funding, a minimum number of attendees will need to be established to ensure that all costs are covered.

Where will the event be held?

The event's venue and location can make or break the event. Costs can also play a big role in this decision. Suggestions for appropriate venues include local schools, churches, performing arts centers, colleges or universities (especially for an overnight camp), community centers, etc. In addition, you'll want to consider the ease of traveling to the venue (will parents and/or students be able to get there easily on the day/time of your event? Is parking readily available? Does public transportation service the area?) as well as the appropriateness of the location (is the area safe for youngsters? Will guardians feel comfortable bringing their students to this part of town?).

Festival planners should also take into consideration the number of rooms available for sectional rehearsals as well as the size of the rehearsal space so that risers and choreography can be accommodated. If the event is school sponsored it should be covered by the school's insurance policy. If the venue is contracted by a SingUnited International chorus (such as a chorus' rehearsal space), please contact the [Education Department](#) to obtain a certificate of insurance.

What age range of singers will be invited, and where will we find participants in this demographic?

Many factors may play into answering this question including the location of the chorus, the day that the event will be held (school day versus weekend), how many adults are available to assist, etc. Once the age range for participants has been established, the clinician should choose music carefully to be sure that it is vocally appropriate for the entire group. While a group of all high school singers may be able to handle some of the more arrangements, a mixture of junior high and high school students may require choosing easier music.

Although schools are usually the first thought when looking to contact youth, church youth groups, Girl Scouts or Girl Guides, home school associations, private vocal studios and other youth organizations can also be great contacts.

Should there be a maximum number of attendees?

When deciding on how many youth to allow to register for an event, the age of the participants and the number of adults needed to facilitate the event should be considered, as well as the size of the location where the event will be held, and the costs.

Who will be the clinician?

There may be local SingUnited members who are qualified and willing to assist as clinicians for youth events. You are encouraged to maintain regular correspondence with choruses in their region and inform the [Education Department](#) at International of regional and local youth outreach programs.

PLANNING THE BUDGET

These are items to consider when presenting a youth outreach program budget to the Regional Management Team (RMT):

Publicity

- ❖ Printing
- ❖ Mailing costs
- ❖ Signs/banners
- ❖ Paid Ads
- ❖ Other printed materials

Festival Expenses

- ❖ Site fee
- ❖ Clinician fees
- ❖ Music (50 free copies of up to three songs on the list provided by SingUnited International; additional copies are available for purchase at a reduced cost)
- ❖ Learning media: learning tracks and CD's
- ❖ Fees for providing a secure web host for downloads
- ❖ Copying/printing
- ❖ Folders/notebooks
- ❖ Snacks (can be donated by local chorus)
- ❖ Lunch (or have participants bring their own lunches/drinks)
- ❖ Drinks/water bottles
- ❖ Riser rental and/or transportation
- ❖ Miscellaneous supplies: first aid kit, markers, pens, staples, tape, etc.
- ❖ Paper goods
- ❖ Props/costumes (if provided by the festival)

Chapter Incentives

- ❖ RMT may decide to offer incentives to chapters that host a youth outreach program or event

Contest Costs

- ❖ Primp/Warm-Up Room Supplies
- ❖ Printing
- ❖ Awards/medals
- ❖ Sponsorship to Rising Star Quartet Contest at International Convention
- ❖ Snacks and beverages for judges

Exhibit Booth at regional activities

- ❖ There should be minimal costs for printing, photo display, etc.

Exhibit Booth at Other Educator Conferences

- ❖ Display booth rental costs.
- ❖ Regional/Chapter costs include housing, food, mileage, and costs for “trinkets” for music educators.

Income:

- ❖ Youth contest entrance fees
- ❖ Grants from SingUnited International; local and national grants
- ❖ Sponsorships
- ❖ Financial assistance to schools or community groups that offer youth activities

Planning a Regional Youth Festival

A successful youth festival takes quite a lot of planning. Before you begin, make sure that you have the buy-in of the entire RMT because it will take everyone to make a festival successful. You need to consider the amount of time it takes, your regional budget, and the audience you want to attract. Your plans must be realistic in their scope as to who your target audience is and how many girls you will be serving. If you are planning an event during the school year you must realize that the music educator's year is quite busy and she/he needs to see that this event fits in with his/her schedule and lesson plans. Your approach should be one of enhancing the music program by allowing the girls to experience the unique musical art form of barbershop harmony as well as increasing their vocal and musicianship skills. Additional information can be found in the [Youth Festival Planning Guide](#).

TIMELINE

12+ Months in Advance

- ❖ Determine your target audience: Consider locale, demographics and possible venues.
- ❖ Location: Will your event be centrally located or will you host workshops throughout the region?
- ❖ Dates: Consider summer, weekends, and school days keeping in mind school schedules that might affect attendance.
- ❖ Budget: Does the region cover the costs, or will you charge a fee? Decide what will be worn for performance. Will the region provide specific articles of clothing or do the girls need to bring their own? Include any of these costs in the budget.
- ❖ Registration: Who will handle contacting schools, registration, confirmations, distribution of materials, and facilitate the event?
- ❖ PR: Begin basic marketing to chapters.
- ❖ Collaboration: Contact BHS to discuss hosting a co-ed event.

9-12 Months in Advance

- ❖ Venue: Make a site visit to determine the availability of sufficient space, break-out rooms, policy on food/drinks at facility, seating for guests for performance and, if necessary, adequate parking and security. Reserve your venue, with a deposit if required. Determine what insurance waivers the site requires. For a SingUnited sponsored event (region or chapter) contact the [Education Department](#) at International Headquarters.
- ❖ Budget: Finalize your budget and the cost, if any, to students.
- ❖ Logistics: Determine if you will be providing lunch or snacks or if you'll be asking students to bring their own.
- ❖ Clinician: Hire a clinician
- ❖ Teaching Quartet: You might consider using a quality quartet to teach the music, serve as section leaders and perform for the participants.
- ❖ Collaboration: Communicate with BHS District YIH coordinator if hosting co-ed event.
- ❖ PR: Compile a list of music educators or purchase list from state choral directors' organization.
- ❖ PR: Notify the region and the [Education Department](#) at International Headquarters regarding the event dates for listing on the website and/or newsletter.

6-9 Months in Advance

- ❖ Music Selection: In consultation with the clinician, select music.
- ❖ PR: Inform chapters of the event and request that they put it on their calendars.
- ❖ PR: Prepare initial marketing piece for regional and chorus events.
- ❖ Collaboration: Communicate with BHS counterpart.
- ❖ Venue: Follow up on communications with venue.
- ❖ Logistics: Plan event schedule in coordination with clinician, quartet and RMT.
- ❖ School Visits: Make personal contact with music educators and offer goodwill effort such as assisting with events, performances, etc.

3-6 Months in Advance

- ❖ PR: Send marketing piece to schools, chapters, and local press.
- ❖ School Visits: Visit classrooms and make a short presentation about SingUnited International to promote the festival.
- ❖ PR: Leave event flyer and registration information with music educator.
- ❖ Venue: Reconfirm arrangements with venue.

- ❖ Logistics: Finalize schedule.
- ❖ Music: Order music and learning media from International Headquarters, if applicable
- ❖ Clinician: Communicate with clinician regarding travel plans, housing, and schedule.
- ❖ Collaboration: Communicate with BHS.

6 Weeks in Advance

- ❖ Coordination: Follow up with music educators.
- ❖ Coordination: Make sure you have collected all of the necessary release forms from the students and their parents/guardians. This is essential for all participants under the age of 18.
- ❖ Coordination: Follow up with volunteers.
- ❖ Logistics: Arrange for riser transportation.
- ❖ Registration: Confirm attendees with music educators; deliver/send music and learning media.

2 Weeks in Advance

- ❖ Coordination: Reminder communication to music educators.
- ❖ Coordination: Reminder to volunteers.
- ❖ Clinician: Contact with clinician regarding final transportation needs, special requests, etc.
- ❖ Logistics: Prepare event folders/bags/water bottles or whatever your region decides to provide.
- ❖ Registration: Prepare check-in materials such as sign-in sheet, nametags, section room designations, copy of schedule for students/music educators.
- ❖ Hospitality: Place order for food, drinks, and snacks, if provided.
- ❖ Hospitality: Arrange for ice, water sources, and paper goods.
- ❖ Hospitality: Provide food/drinks/snacks for clinician and quartet.

1 Week Before the Event

- ❖ Coordination: Finalize all plans, volunteers, send friendly reminders to music educators.
- ❖ Venue: Visit venue, arrange for key or whom to contact upon arrival.
- ❖ Logistics: Confirm riser delivery/set-up.
- ❖ Clinician: Confirm final plans with clinician.

Day of the Event

- ❖ Coordination: Arrive early, organize your thoughts. Plan to meet with your team to ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities, duties and assignments.
- ❖ Registration: Set up registration area, display relevant materials.
- ❖ Venue: Place signage in venue indicating rehearsal rooms, restrooms, food area, etc.
- ❖ Greet your guests.
- ❖ Enjoy the day.
- ❖ Clean up, riser removal, and secure facility.

Planning a Regional Youth Quartet Contest

The purpose of hosting a Youth Quartet contest is to promote barbershop singing among youth in a fun way. It is **not** to be used as a means of recruiting chorus members. By allowing young singers to have a quartet contest experience, they build on their singing skills and learn to be more independent singers. The following outline is one way to go about organizing a youth quartet contest, feel free to adjust it according to the specific needs of your region.

THE PLANNING STAGE

Select Your Date

Usually, these contests are held in conjunction with another regional activity, which allows region members the opportunity to be in the audience and support the girls. When planning the date, consider relevant state music activities such as All-Region or All-State Choir events. You cannot avoid every conflict; instead, make an effort to avoid the major school holidays and music events. The time of your event is important. A school night will not allow many students to participate and if they have a distance to travel, take that into consideration when setting your day and time.

Choose Your Site

A centrally located site is preferred; however, if the event is part of another event, the site is already determined. The site needs warm-up rooms, photo room, and a performance space with a stage, if possible.

Designate a Contest Administrator

Choose someone to oversee the registration process and coordinate the actual contest. This person needs to provide a contact number and e-mail address so that quartet sponsors can keep in touch with her.

Publicity Designed for Your Event

A PR piece announcing the contest should be distributed to chapters early enough to allow enough time for quartets to form and practice. Chapters are asked to distribute information to area high schools and colleges. Make sure there is a website listed so that registration forms and more information can be easily accessed. A contact e-mail and phone number should be included so that questions can be answered easily.

Costs for the Event

Hosting a contest should not cost a large amount of money. Expenses include printing of flyers, primp/warm-up supplies, cost of awards, prize money (if offered), and snacks/drinks for the judges. These costs can be part of the regional budget or can be covered by entry fees. Any entry fee should be nominal. Generally, requiring quartets to pay even a small fee makes them more likely to commit to following through on their participation.

Prizes

Medals go a long way in making this contest feel “real.” Receiving a medal is a fun part of the experience and can give credibility to the contest. Some regions may choose to award ribbons, certificates or small trophies instead of medals. Some regions offer cash prizes to the top three quartets as an incentive for participation. Awards can be ordered from many vendors online and an online search will yield a number of options.

Rising Star Quartet Contest

If the Regional Management Team (RMT) determines that they will sponsor a quartet to the Rising Star Quartet Contest at International competition and convention, a minimum score for sponsorship should be decided. Sponsorship does not necessarily mean that the entire cost to participate at International will be funded. It is reasonable to expect quartets to be responsible for earning some of their funds. How much the region is able to fund should be determined by the RMT. In addition, should the RMT decide that they will hold a youth quartet contest that will award a prize of sponsorship to International for the winning quartet, it is requested that they inform the [Education Department](#) at International Headquarters of this decision as well as the outcome of the contest.

Registration Process

Registration information, with a cover letter, must be sent to music educators and chapters prior to the end of classes in the spring or at the beginning of classes in the fall, depending upon your contest date. Set your registration deadline as late as you can so that every opportunity possible is given to fledgling quartets.

Encourage chapters to take information to area schools and make personal visits to the music educators. Chapters may wish to sponsor a quartet and help with music selection and coaching.

Required release forms for participants

These forms are available in the Youth section of the [Members Only Education Center](#) of our website.

The actual contest day

It's nice to make it feel like a "real" SingUnited contest, especially if you'll be sponsoring the winning quartet to sing at the International convention:

- ❖ Hold a quartet briefing with quartet members and educators: explain the pattern and logistics of a contest.
- ❖ Determine when the results will be announced and inform the quartets ahead of time.
- ❖ Explain placement, prizes and the Rising Star Quartet Contest and minimum score for regional sponsorship, if applicable.
- ❖ Inform them that they can choose to participate in the Rising Star Quartet Contest even if they do not win the regional contest, but that any sponsorship will be determined by the RMT.
- ❖ One idea is to create a backstage pattern that replicates the authentic SingUnited International competitions. Otherwise, be sure the logistics backstage are organized in a way that will keep the singers from becoming lost and the schedule running on time.
- ❖ Provide a judging pit. At the judges' table there should be lights, water, proper SingUnited International scoresheets and snacks for the judges.
- ❖ Announce the contestants in regular contest style.
- ❖ Determine who will present the medals or awards and have them prepared for the proper time.
- ❖ Give a Rising Star Quartet Contest information packet with information on contest location and registration costs to all participating quartets. The qualifying quartet should also receive specific information regarding expectations of behavior from a sponsored quartet, as well as the registration form, if available.

This is your event. It should be fun to plan and not too stressful. Talk it up at your regional events, via your regional website, newsletters and directly to your chapters. Encourage them to publicize it locally. And make sure the chapters understand that this is not a recruiting event.