

1. Description of Request

The Any Chorus (ACC) requests a grant of \$8,000 in support of this unique small arts organization's programming and operations for the 2008-2009 Season. This funding will help ACC to meet its revenue goals for the coming year by supplementing the funds raised through member dues, concert ticket sales, an annual fundraising gala, annual campaign contributions from members of the Board of Directors and the general public to the annual campaign, foundation grants, and support from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The funding is specifically to assist in the production of its main concert season and continuing outreach initiatives.

2. Organization/Goals

a. Provide your organization's mission statement and a brief history.

Mission Statement – The Any Chorus' mission is to be a leading artistic organization representing Pittsburgh's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, building bridges within the GLBT community and with the greater community as an interactive contributor to the cultural life of the tri-state area. Building on a history of artistry, involvement, and pride, ACC fulfills its mission by (1) presenting innovative programming of the highest quality; (2) encouraging cooperation with the GLBT community, locally and nationally; (3) representing the GLBT community as a visible participant in the region's cultural life; and (4) maintaining a financially sound organization to support its goals. Our programming includes challenging, contemporary music with commissions of new works and performing ambitious, traditional repertoire alongside music from various world cultures. The programming focuses on a wide variety of choral music from all time periods and presenting styles that educate, challenge and enlighten both our audiences and our singing membership. Additionally, the choirs continue to affirm, by example and through song, the worth and dignity of sexual minorities. Music that is gay positive and openly supports issues related to human equality and justice is represented at all concerts.

History - Renaissance City Choir/Pittsburgh Gay Chorus Inc. was established as a gay male chorus in 1985. In 1987, ACC became a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and joined the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses (GALA) – an international organization with 9,500 members and 180 choruses. In 1995 the women's chorus was formed. Since 1995, ACC has been performing a Holiday Concert that features both choirs, singing separately and together, and in 2006 moved to performing our Spring Concerts in a joint format as well. Beginning in 2001, the choirs have had annual workshops with nationally recognized clinicians including Dr. Ysaye Barnwell, Dr. Timothy Seelig, Dr. Andre Thomas, and Dr. Robert Page. ACC has attended GALA choral festivals in 2000, 2002 and 2004. In July, ACC will perform at the GALA Choruses 25th Anniversary Festival in Miami which will be attended by over 125 choruses with more than 5,000 delegates.

In 2004, a major choral work was commissioned from Dr. James Mulholland to celebrate ACC's 20th anniversary. The suite, entitled *Mementos of Millay*, was performed at the GALA Choral Festival in Montreal in 2004 and in Pittsburgh at the 2004 Holiday Concert. In 2005, two new works were commissioned – one from former RCWC director Susan Haugh entitled *Lights* and the second, *When We Sing*, by Stephen Milloy. Both were performed at the 2005 Holiday Concert. ACC was recently awarded a \$6,000 grant by the Heinz Endowments, in part, to fund a major new commission by Dr. Jeffrey Nytych, a distinguished Pittsburgh composer, involving a large-scale, multi-movement work illuminating issues pertinent to the daily lives of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities through words and music. This work will be featured at ACC's 2009 Spring concert.

In addition to playing an important role in Pittsburgh's Pride Festival every year, ACC has lent its talents to many other community and charitable events over the years, both within and outside of the GLBT community. Since its formation, the ACC has sought, through artistic excellence, to foster gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and supportive (GLBT) community spirit and pride, as well as to encourage the acceptance of sexual minorities by the wider community in Western PA.

b. List your organization's goals as outlined in your long range plan.

The 2007-2010 Strategic Plan specifies the following goals:

- Responsibilities of ACC membership will be clearly defined, and details of those responsibilities will be readily available to all ACC members
- **Singers:** ACC will achieve a more diverse and numerically consistent singing membership throughout the performance season, and the combined choirs' membership will consist of at least 100 singing members at any given time
- **Board:** ACC's Board of Directors will be larger, more active, more visible, and better reflective of the diversity of our community.
- The Annual Campaign will reach \$60,000 annually

Any Chorus

- Special Events & Fundraisers will net \$50,000 annually
- ACC's salaries will be commensurate with the salaries offered by similarly-situated choirs
- Corporate Sponsorships will become a reality
- ACC will establish an Endowment

While this is an ambitious set of goals for this relatively small organization, it is realistic because each one is followed by a series of action steps to be taken to achieve it, and the person or group responsible for each step is clearly identified, along with a target date for accomplishing each step.

The previous two strategic plans focused primarily on building a stable, well-functioning infrastructure with more support from non-singing Board members. ACC has succeeded in establishing a stronger board of community leaders who have a variety of backgrounds and skill sets, and in implementing new processes and regularizing them to continue the organization on its path of growth. Other goals were to continue to improve artistic quality, to increase individual giving, and to create and build a signature special event

c. Describe the progress you made last year in meeting your goals.

Over the last two seasons, the artistic energy of the ACC has changed dramatically under the leadership of new Artistic Director, Andrés Cladera. Upon nomination by the renowned conductor Dr. Robert Page, Cladera was awarded the 2007 ACDA-PA Outstanding Young Conductor award, and has established collaborations with other laurelled conductors like Dr. Tim Seelig, Artistic Director of GALA Choruses and, Dennis Coleman, Artistic Director of the Seattle Gay Men's and Women's Choruses. In the winter of 2008, Mr Caldera was appointed the artistic Director for both the Men's Choir and the Women's Choir. In addition to dramatically raising the quality of singing and presentation, ACC programming now includes challenging, contemporary music with commissions of new works and performing ambitious, traditional repertoire alongside music from various world cultures. The programming focus is on a wide variety of choral music from all time periods and presenting styles that educate, challenge and enlighten both our audiences and our singing membership.

The choirs continue to affirm, by example and through song, the worth and dignity of sexual minorities. Music that is 'gay positive' and openly supports issues related to human equality and justice is represented at all concerts. This is proven by our participation in different outreach

performances with the National Negro Opera House, Pittsburgh's Light Up Night, Persad Center's "Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art," collaborations with independent schools, and events at Soldiers and Sailors and Carnegie Music Hall. We have had great success with our Holiday Concerts. After one of these concerts, which are broadcast on WQED FM, station manager Jim Cunningham commented: "ACC's Holiday Concert is the most entertaining and diverse holiday concert in Pittsburgh."

Our artistic strength is in the performance of traditional choral music in a traditional setting. Our artistic development efforts for the past several years have focused on breath control and tuning skills – the types of challenges which were presented by the long phrases and complex harmonies of *Mementos of Millay*, our 20th anniversary commission from 2004. Our singers continue to improve their knowledge of music style, overall music theory and interpretation of diverse musical genres. Current priorities include a strong focus on their vocal growth and especially on vocal health. The artistic director has made a primary goal to attract young singers, as well as reinvigorating aging voices of existing members. One important way the ACC is continuing to raise performance quality is by implementing a thorough audition process. Each singer has a private audition with the Artistic Director and Assistant Conductor Jack Kurutz, enabling us to develop a more accurate and complete assessment of the capabilities of each singer. We test their range and listen to a performance of a selection of music of their choice, showing us their best as well as their musical taste and knowledge. We proceed with several vocal exercises to fully assess both their vocal capabilities and their responsiveness to guidance and training. The audition concludes with a short sight-reading section, a valuable component in determining the singer's general musical knowledge and how quickly they will learn new material.

This multi-pronged approach of expanding the group's repertoire, developing musical skills, increasing an attention to details and "polish," carefully selecting a variety of talented singers through the audition process, and enhancing singers' vocal health is already generating exciting results in the quality of singing heard by our audiences. We expect this trend to gain momentum as time goes on and the choirs have more and more opportunities to perform in a variety of settings.

In other areas, the organization has been extremely successful in creating and building a signature special event – the annual Valentine's Dance. This fundraising event is the only activity of its kind in Pittsburgh, offering an elegant evening where members of the GLBT community can comfortably celebrate the romantic holiday that others take for granted. As such, it has grown quickly, and this year netted \$32,418 for ACC.

Salaries have been compared to the latest GALA salary survey and are commensurate with what is being paid by other choirs of similar size.

3. Governance

ACC is governed by a Board of Directors which includes two representatives from each of the choirs (RCMC and RCWC) and nine non-singing members drawn from the community at large. [There is no prohibition on having additional singers serving in at-large positions, but in practice being a singer requires a substantial time commitment; thus, it is usually only if someone decides to stop participating as a singer that he or she would seek membership on the Board.] The Board Members serve two year terms and there are no limits to the number of terms they serve. They are drawn from the community and bring a wide variety of skills, backgrounds and contacts to their service on the Board. Additionally, the Artistic Director and the Managing Director sit on the Board as non-voting advisors.

ACC's progress towards meeting its operational objectives is monitored on a monthly basis by the Board of Directors. The Managing Director, Artistic Director and Choir Representatives provide reports at each monthly meeting. There is also a report on the actual financial results compared to the budget. This ongoing review process provides for the documentation of ACC's progress and results in meeting its operational and financial goals.

The Board utilizes an Executive Committee comprising the Board President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and a representative from the choir to serve as the personnel committee and to take such actions as may be required in between regularly scheduled monthly Board meetings. Other standing committees include the Finance Committee and the Board Development Committee. Event advisory committees are used to provide support and guidance to the staff in executing the concert and special events schedule.

ACC has a complete strategic plan for the 2007-2010 period. Goals and actions steps have been set for the entire plan period. On a quarterly basis, the Board reviews a report of progress against those goals and makes adjustments as necessary.

The Any Chorus Board of Directors as of June 30, 2008 includes Pamela G. Cochenour, Esq., *President*; Larry Buseck, *Vice President*; Paul E. Block, JD, CPA, *Treasurer*; Richard Helldobler, Ph. D.; Charles Hrutkay, Esq.; Joseph J. Kennedy, IV; Kathleen Schneider, Esq.; Roger Westman; Gary A. McKillop; Scott Bell; Chris Miller; Tom Montgomery; and Erica Olden.

The Board is continually looking for potential new members from the community. The entire membership, singing and non-singing, meet once a year to vote on new Board Members and matters that require the approval of the membership, including amending the bylaws when necessary. The bylaws were completely revised in 2004 in an effort to bring them current with organizational terminology and practices.

ACC currently has three paid employees, all part-time. We have an Artistic Director, an Assistant Artistic Director/Accompanist and a Managing Director. Personnel evaluations for the staff are performed on an annual basis by the Executive Committee. There are job descriptions for all staff positions and a handbook describing the obligations of the singing members.

4. Community Service/ Outreach

Since our formation, ACC has sought to foster GLBT community spirit and pride, as well as encourage acceptance of sexual minorities by the wider community, all done through the power of music. Many of ACC's performances beyond the regular season of Holiday Concert and Spring Concert are actually a form of community service and outreach. Our structure allows the men's and women's choirs to perform either together or apart. ACC realizes that its primary support and most faithful audience comes from Allegheny County's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community as well as their friends and family. The Board has recognized the need to expand our audience and membership beyond these current boundaries, including a wider segment of the County and beyond. This commitment is underscored by our participation in various outreach performances including:

- City of Pittsburgh Light Up Night
- Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art in support of Persad Center
- National Negro Opera House Commemoration in conjunction with the Ellis School and the Young Preservationists Association of Pittsburgh

- Shepherd Wellness Center Dinner
- Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills
- PFLAG
- Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall for the Anne Lamott Event sponsored by Community of Reconciliation Church
- The Pittsburgh Pride Festival

Other activities outside the City of Pittsburgh will be planned as the programming for the 2008-2009 season continues.

The audiences that the ACC reaches vary in age, race, culture, sexual orientation and religion. The choir membership likewise represents a cross-section of the community at large.

Reduced ticket prices are provided for students and all ACC events offer an opportunity for individuals of limited financial means to provide volunteer services in lieu of purchasing a ticket.

All of ACC's performances other than the primary concert season are free. ACC's two season concerts are signed for the hearing impaired, as are some of the outreach performances.

5. Programming & Performance 2007-2008 Season

Subscription Concerts	Additional Concerts
2007 Annual Holiday Concert <i>Holidays Around the World</i> Joint Choir Concert East Liberty Presbyterian Church December 8, 2007	<i>City of Pittsburgh Light Up Night</i> Renaissance City Women's Choir
2008 Spring Concert <i>Rainbow Broadway</i> Joint Choir Concert The Ellis School May 16-17, 2008	<i>Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art</i> in support of the Persad Center Joint Choir Concert Carnegie Museum
	<i>National Negro Opera House Commemoration</i> Joint Choir Concert in conjunction with The Ellis School and the Young Preservationist Association of Pittsburgh Homewood
	Shepherd Wellness Community Renaissance City Men's Choir First United Methodist Church December 14, 2007
	Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills
	PFLAG Concert Third Presbyterian Church December 9, 2007
	Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall for the Anne Lamott Event sponsored by Community of Reconciliation Church Joint Choir Concert Oakland March 1, 2008
	ACC Valentine's Day Dance Selected Ensemble Grand Hall at the Priory February 16, 2008
	Celebration of the Life of Randy Forrester Grand Hall at the Priory May 4, 2007
	Joan Rivers at the Byham Theater In support of the Lambda Foundation June 21, 2008

2008 – 2009 Season

Subscription Concerts	Additional Concerts
2008 Annual Holiday Concert <i>Keep the Yuletide Gay</i> Joint Choir Concert East Liberty Presbyterian Church December 13, 2008	GALA Choruses 25 th Anniversary Festival Miami, FL July 19, 2008
2009 Spring Concert <i>L.O.V.E.</i> Joint Choir Concert The Ellis School May 15-16, 2009	Renaissance City Men’s Choir Shepherd Wellness Community First United Methodist Church December 14, 2008
Cabaret Performance <i>Hi Ho the Gay Life</i> Joint Choir Concert In June 2009 during Pride Week	Any Chorus PFLAG Concert Third Presbyterian Church December 2008
	Any Chorus Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art in support of Persad Center May 2009

6. Shared Services

ACC rents office and rehearsal space through an arrangement with Hope Academy. In return for a \$3,600 contribution to Hope Academy, ACC has access to an office and a music room in which to hold rehearsals for both choirs. While we have not priced similar space in other locations, we believe that the savings are in the tens of thousands of dollars per year. The only other significant services purchased by ACC are marketing material design and printing services. If some type of collaborative purchasing arrangement were available for these services ACC would be interested in exploring the possibility.

7. District Support Acknowledgement

ACC is committed to properly acknowledging the Allegheny Regional Asset District for their support and are very proud to be recognized for its excellence and service. We recognize that much of our audience resides outside of the City of Pittsburgh city limits but remain within Allegheny County. We continue to perform at venues outside of the city limits whenever possible. The ARAD logo is on all of our marketing materials and on our web site. ARAD is verbally acknowledged from the podium of ACC’s Holiday Concert which is broadcast on WQED FM.

8. Financial Status

This extremely ambitious season will require ACC to raise nearly \$114,000 in earned and unearned revenue. ACC’s annual campaign is targeted for \$25,000 with contributions from the ACC Board representing nearly 50% of the annual campaign. Earned revenue from ticket sales cover 25% of the group’s expenses. Special events such as the Valentine’s Gala make an enormous contribution to funding our budget. Grant funding continues to remain a major component of our financial picture with operating funding from ARAD, PA Partners in the Arts and the Lambda Foundation filling a critical need. The ACC has also recently received a \$6,000 grant from the Heinz Endowment, in part, to fund a new commission.

9. Estimated Budget

Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009

(list high level budget information here, as required by the grantor)

10. Geographic Distribution

Part A – Summary of all participants

Part B – Distributions of Allegheny County Residents

Percentage	Location
57%	City of Pittsburgh
29%	County of Allegheny (outside Pittsburgh)
12%	Outside Allegheny County within PA
2%	Outside of PA

Part C – Program Location

Performance/Program	Location: County/Area	Attendance
City of Pittsburgh Light Up Night	City of Pittsburgh	≈ 150
Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art in support of Persad Center	Carnegie Museum	≈ 500
National Negro Opera House Commemoration in conjunction with The Ellis School and the Young Preservations Association of Pittsburgh	Homewood – City of Pittsburgh	100
Holiday Concert - ACC	East Liberty Presbyterian Church	600
Shepherd Wellness Dinner	First United Methodist Church – City of Pittsburgh	200

Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills	North Hills – Allegheny County	100
PFLAG	Third Presbyterian Church – City of Pittsburgh	100
Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall for the Anne Lamott Event sponsored by Community of Reconciliation Church	Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall – City of Pittsburgh	1,000
Joan Rivers for the benefit of the Lambda Foundation	Byham Theater – City of Pittsburgh	525
Spring Concert - ACC	The Ellis School, Shadyside – City of Pittsburgh	600
Celebration of the Life of Randy Forrester	Grand Hall at the Priory – City of Pittsburgh	≈ 200

11. Organization Diversity EMPLOYEES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (do not include advisory board members)

The Nominating and Election Committee of the Board of Directors seeks to maintain a balance of male and female members and to increase participation from people of color. A specific effort is made in developing each year’s slate of candidates for the Board to make certain that the Board reflects the diversity of the population served by ACC.

The new 2007-2010 Strategic Plan call specifically for the organization to “facilitate outreach to and collaboration with under-represented populations, including but not limited to people of color,” both for the singing membership and for the Board of Directors.

ACC’s purchasing and contracting activities are very limited due to the organization’s size. To the greatest extent possible, services are purchased from the neighborhoods in which we perform, primarily East Liberty (East Liberty Presbyterian Church).