Application Guidelines for Insight Choirs
2027 ACDA National Conference
Minneapolis, MN
March 7-10, 2027

The 2027 National Conference Committee is pleased to continue insight choirs, an initiative launched at the 2023 National Conference in Cincinnati. Insight choirs support missions that are social or community related and use choral music as a tool to reach these goals. Insight choir sessions support and inspire the membership by providing engaging research, pedagogies, practices, and repertoire. Contrasted with demonstration choirs, we consider insight choirs as inextricably linked with the presentation, where the choral ensemble is critical to the topic and the presenter is intimately tied to the ensemble. We seek proposals for a 50-minute session that will actively engage conference participants and contribute to the professional development of our membership. ACDA members in all repertoire and resource areas are invited to apply.

The 2027 National Conference theme is Singing through the Ages. All topics are welcome, but the conference committee is particularly interested in those that celebrate our choral heritage, embody strong pedagogical ideas, scholarly content, and relevance to our choral community. Topics could include but are not limited to:

- Working with singers with special needs
- Working with aging voices in community and religious settings
- Living composer-conductor collaborations
- Working with students in a Title 1 school
- Multigenerational singing
- Non-auditioned choirs that operate and rehearse in alternative ways to meet the needs of their membership and community at large.

I. Eligibility

Conductors/presenters must hold life, paying life, retired, active, or student ACDA membership at the time of application, registration, and performance. Please note that all accepted conductors/presenters are expected to meet ALL posted dates and deadlines. No choir or conductor may perform at successive national conferences as a performing choir, demonstration choir, or insight choir.

II. Registration and Travel Info

It is understood that ACDA will not assume financial responsibility for registration, travel, food, or lodging for presenters or participants. Insight choir conductors must register for the conference. Completing the online application implies that the conductor and the ensemble will obtain the necessary funds to travel and present at the conference if accepted.

Presenters are expected to officially register for the conference at the posted registration rates.

III. Session Conductor/Ensemble Expectations

The conductor and ensemble will arrive 15 minutes prior to the session to establish standing positions and ensure all audiovisual equipment is working properly. Insight choirs will not have a dress rehearsal prior to their session. Ensembles must be under 75 singers and may include a pianist and four additional instrumentalists. It is the responsibility of the ensemble to set up the chairs and music stands for the instrumentalists as per the submitted application materials.

III. Application Process

Submit all application materials as listed below by 11:59 pm CST on April 15, 2026, via the online platform at acda.org/conferences. Help desk support is available until 5:00 pm CST on April 15, 2026. After that time, no support will be provided, even if technical issues are encountered. Applicants are encouraged to plan ahead to ensure they can complete the submission process. *Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason.*

The following is the list of requirements for the application:

1. **Session Title**: The title should be carefully crafted, brief, reflective of the session's content, and no longer than 10 words.

2. **Session Abstract**: A succinct thesis that clearly addresses: (1) a topic that will be helpful and/or inspire the membership, (2) a clear description of the session, and (3) learning outcomes. Please submit the following:

   a. **Session description**: No more than an 1800-character description of the session

   b. *Choral Journal* description: No more than a 900-character description, which will be used in *Choral Journal*

   c. **A brief outline** in bullet points that clarifies the processes and goals of the session (limit 2 pages; single PDF upload)

      • Address the content and key learning outcomes of the session, as well as provide a clearly defined outline. This document will be used to help evaluate your session and may provide content for the conference app.

      • If your session is highlighting rehearsal techniques or something similar, your outline might include details about but is not limited to discussing:

         ○ Repertoire (if any) you plan to address
         ○ Rehearsal techniques (if any) you plan to address
         ○ Ensemble development
         ○ Community engagement

3. **Ensemble Statement (non-adjudicated)**: Applicants are asked to share information about their ensemble and type of institution/organization, ensemble history and mission, and how the ensemble meets the needs of a specific population or does unique work within the choral field. The narrative should be no longer than 1800 characters to help the committee contextualize your ensemble.

4. **Three Recordings from Rehearsals or Performances**

   a. Up to three audio and/or video recordings totaling between 10 to 30 minutes should be submitted. These recordings should provide evidence of your ensemble's ability to clearly demonstrate the mission and/or process(es) described in the session's outline.

   b. If you wish to submit YouTube videos, you will be able to submit a direct link to your video. Please make sure there is no identifying information in the video, including announcing the choir name, or in the video file name.

   c. Accepted file formats for uploads include: mp3, mp4

5. Headshot of conductor in .jpg format, 3" x 5", high-resolution minimum 300 dpi

6. Conductor and Ensemble Biographies

    a. The ensemble's biography (up to 900 characters maximum) as it should appear in the *Choral Journal*

    b. The conductor's biography (up to 900 characters maximum) as it should appear in the *Choral Journal*

7. **An ensemble photo** will only be requested if the session is selected for the conference. The deadline for ensemble photo submission is October 1, 2026.

IV. Selection Process

There are two levels of screening:

1. An initial or first screening level at which finalists will be selected, and

2. A final screening level at which only those recommended from the first screening will be considered.

Level 1: Led by the National R&R Chair, an Adjudication Committee will be formed in each R&R area. The committee that will consist of no fewer than seven members selected from the following: National R&R chair of the area; national and region R&R coordinator of the area; current and/or former region R&R chairs; choral directors who have previously presented at an ACDA region or national conference; past region presidents; past national officers; National Standing Committee members, and others appointed by the national R&R chair to ensure a diverse evaluation committee.

No person submitting an insight choir session application for the 2027 National Conference may serve on the adjudication committee. The online submission process automatically tabulates responses from adjudicators and generates a list indicating the collective top ten submissions in ranked order plus five alternates.

Level 2: The National Conference Committee will review the top 10 submissions in each R&R area, unless fewer than ten are submitted in that area, in which case all submissions will be reviewed by the National Conference Committee.

Every effort will be made to represent a broad range of interest sessions for each R&R area.

V. Schedule of Dates and Application Link

• Application portal opens: February 2026

• April 15, 2026: Insight choir application, uploads, and payment completed by 11:59 pm CST

    • Help desk support is available until 5:00 CST on April 15, 2026. After that time, no support will be provided, even if technical issues are encountered. Applicants are encouraged to plan ahead to ensure they can complete the submission process. *Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason.*

• June 15, 2026: National applications review completed

• June 29, 2026: Applicants notified of results

Application available February 2026 through the online platform at acda.org.