



Steven M. Demorest Research Grant

The Steven M. Demorest Award was established in 2019 to recognize the highest scoring poster proposal at the American Choral Directors National Conference. In 2026, the Research and Publications Committee has recently redesigned the award as a grant for choral music research projects. The purpose of the Demorest Research Grant is to support meaningful and rigorous choral music research by defraying costs relating to participant recruitment, compensation, or incentivization, data collection, management and/or analysis, or other research needs.

Steven Demorest was driven by the belief that singing should not be an elitist activity for the chosen few; rather, singing was a way for everyone to build community and find joy. A prolific researcher, Demorest studied the assessment and remediation of inaccurate singing, cross-cultural music understanding, and sight-singing pedagogy. He authored two books: *Building Choral Excellence: Sight-Singing in the Choral Rehearsal* (Oxford) and *Choral Music Methods and Materials* (Cengage), co-authored with Barbara Brinson. Additionally, he edited the book *Creating the Special World: A Collection of Lectures by Weston H. Noble* (GIA). Former Professor of Choral Music Education at Northwestern University, University of Washington, and the University of North Texas, and alumnus of Luther College, Demorest received the Weston Noble award for outstanding contributions to choral music in 2007. He passed away in 2019 and has left a rich legacy of scholarly inquiry and excellence in choral music research.

The Steven M. Demorest Research Grant will be awarded to one recipient annually in the amount of \$1,000 and is non-renewable. The Research and Publications Committee welcomes applications that meet the following criteria:

- The author must be an active or student member of ACDA.
- The research must be the original work of the author seeking funding.
- The research project may be in planning or in progress, but cannot be completed, in-press, or published.
- The research method, recruitment practices, and implementation must be approved by the author's institutional review board.

- The topic must be related to choral music, including but not limited to choral music education, performance practice, conductor guides, an analysis of a composer's oeuvre, a historical analysis, a pedagogical tool, etc.
- Co-authored or multi-authored submissions are acceptable, but only one \$1,000 will be awarded for the project. If co-authored or multi-authored, the submitting author must be an active or student member of ACDA.
- The author's research project may have additional funding from other entities. In those cases, authors should detail funding sources and expenses covered by those funds in their budget.
- ACDA will support the recipient's dissemination of the research project in a poster session within a regional or national conference.
- Recipients will be expected to submit for consideration a research synopsis in the *Choral Journal's* research report column.
- Recipients are to include the following statement in publication and presentation: "This research project was made possible, in part, by the Steven M. Demorest Research Grant of the American Choral Directors Association."

Research proposals will require the following items, entered separately:

- Author name(s), institutional affiliations, ACDA membership # (for application purposes only, this information will be anonymized for peer review)
- Author(s) demographic information (optional, not used for adjudication)
- An abstract of the project, not to exceed 750 words, including a detailed outline of the topic, purpose, method, plans for analysis, timeline, and feasibility of project.
- Documentation of Institutional Review Board exemption or approval (PDF upload)
- A detailed line-item budget for the project, including sources for cost estimates and, if applicable, additional funding sources. Collapse budget documents into one submittable PDF. (PDF upload) *Note well:* Funds may not be used for authors to compensate themselves or in some cases, other people, such as graduate research assistants.
- Describe your future plans for conference presentation, including poster dissemination at an ACDA conference, and/or manuscript submission; not to exceed 75 words.

Timeline for grant proposal review and notification:

- Thurs, Nov 5, 2026: Application opens at <https://acda.org/resources/research-and-publications-committee>
- Tues, Dec 1, 2026: Application deadline
- Fri, Feb 5, 2027: Notifications sent

Award Evaluation Rubric

Rubric Item & Score	4 (Highest)	3	2	1 (Lowest)	Reviewer Notes
Research topic	Original research topic in choral music with excellent potential to develop new knowledge or further existing knowledge.	Research topic in choral music with very good potential to develop knowledge/background.	Research topic emerging, unsure how topic develops new or furthers existing knowledge.	Unclear research topic or topic with deep extant literature missing extensions or new direction.	
Purpose, method, & analysis	Purpose, method and analysis evidence excellent alignment and fit for topic.	Purpose, method and analysis evidence very good alignment and fit for topic.	Purpose, method and analysis evidence some alignment and fit for topic.	Unclear alignment or concerns about alignment of purpose, method, analysis and fit.	
Budget	Highly detailed line-item budget including sources and explanations resulting in strong case for funding.	Clear line-item budget with sources and explanations resulting in very good case for funding.	Line-item budget missing sources and/or explanations resulting in incomplete or less compelling case for funding.	Line-item budget missing several elements, incomplete, or missing altogether.	
Future plans for dissemination	Clearly described future dissemination plans within presentation or publication venues that will greatly benefit.	Future dissemination plans well explained within presentation or publication venues that will benefit.	Future Presentation or publication indicated but may be non-specific or unrealistic.	Lacks discussion of future presentation or publication venues.	
Proposal clarity, organization, and project feasibility	Outstanding proposal clarity and organization. Project highly feasible as outlined.	Very good proposal clarity and organization. Project appears feasible as outlined.	Proposal not always clear or organized. Unclear or unrealistic project feasibility.	Proposal lacks clarity, organization, which compromises feasibility.	