



We're thrilled you're interested in more information about becoming a member of our chorus. We hope this will answer your initial questions but please don't hesitate to reach out at HDHReno@gmail.com as other questions arise.

Auditioning

Before a prospective member can participate as an active member of High Desert Harmony, an audition must be passed. The audition song is Chordbusters March - [here's a "virtual choir" version](#) we put together back in 2020. After your first visit, we provide access to the sheet music and part learning tracks. When ready, record yourself singing with the full mix learning track or standing on the risers. Auditions with five or fewer note errors will be passed to the next step. The full process is outlined in detail at the end of this document.

Don't worry about the other songs the chorus is singing. Be patient with yourself and just focus on the audition song. Reach out to the membership chair, your section leader, or the musical director if you are struggling or have any questions.

What does it cost to join High Desert Harmony?

There is a one-time fee of \$150, and the monthly fee is \$30. For those women under age 25 (Young Women in Harmony), the initial fee is \$65 and the monthly cost is \$20.

Attendance expectations

Members are encouraged to attend rehearsals regularly but are permitted to miss up to 4 in a row or 6 over 2 months and remain in "good standing." Absences in excess of this need prior approval. Members are expected to indicate their attendance on the member website and stay up-to-date on things that are missed – tools and resources are made easily accessible to do so.

Chorus-Life Balance

We ALL have things in our lives that require a higher priority than HDH. We hope the chorus is a place where members can come and escape their day-to-day stress, develop relationships that make life more fulfilling, and embrace the joy of singing. That said, sometimes it can be more stressful to attend rehearsal than not. When that is the case, we hope you would choose self-care and catch up on what you missed when able. Please make sure your attendance is updated on the website, or notify your section leader or membership contact when you are unable to attend.

Other information for members:

What do my dues cover?

Your money is going toward a number of things:

- Sweet Adelines International and regional fees;
- Purchasing new music and learning tracks;
- Salary and education for our director, as well as coaching fees;
- Rehearsal space;
- Costumes, and other miscellaneous chorus fees and supplies

Are there any additional costs?

The chorus uses your dues for a number of things, but there will still be certain items you will have to pay for yourself (or things you may want to purchase):

- A personal recording device, which can be your cell phone or another device of your choice.
- Costumes and Accessories – Though much is covered by your monthly dues, there may still be things you will need to purchase yourself, such as nylons or shoes. Attire from your own wardrobe will often be used for some performances, e.g., black pants, colored shirt, etc. The costume plan will be shared prior to each performance.
- Makeup – Personal makeup is used for community performances. Makeup in addition to what you may typically wear is recommended for our annual competition and other performances under stage lights.
- Chorus Retreats – Though the chorus typically pays the coaching fees associated with these sessions, members may need to cover meals (or hotels if the retreat is held outside of Reno).
- Regional Educational Events – These are optional events, and members are responsible for their registration fee, hotel and meals.
- Regional Competition – All members of a competing chorus (or quartet) must pay a registration fee. For the past several years, Competition has been held right here in Reno! You may choose to stay in the hotel, but this is not required.

The chorus will always make an effort to let you know well in advance when a personal expense is coming up so you can plan accordingly.

What happens between each Monday night rehearsal?

Members receive weekly emails with reminders of music to work on and sometimes additional information for skill-building and expanding our knowledge. At a minimum, we hope members will prepare for the songs to be sung the following week (even as little as listening through the learning track), but we understand that is sometimes not possible. We all understand that we will get out what we put into this experience.

Additional events include: Regional education events, held in Sacramento twice a year; Regional Competition, which is held in Reno over a weekend in April or May; and semi-annual weekend retreats. Major annual performances are typically scheduled on a weekend and there will be many opportunities for "sing-outs" at various times throughout the week. All of these are optional, but participation is encouraged.

Attendance and Rehearsal Etiquette

In-person attendance is encouraged, but there's an option for members to attend on Zoom when necessary.

In-person Rehearsal Etiquette

We expect all of our members to behave in a way that minimizes distraction for fellow members and the director. If you need to leave early, or arrive late, please just do so with minimal interruption. When possible, please let your section leader or the director know in advance.

While it would be ideal for all members to stand for a full rehearsal, some members find this difficult. Members may sit to the side of the risers as needed.

The director will place members on the risers in different ways depending on members' voices and upcoming

performances. Remain flexible and open-minded about your placement. If you have an issue with your placement that is making it difficult for you to participate, please let the director know.

Please do not sing along with another part when yours is not singing, unless invited. Remember that chatter on the risers is distracting to everyone. If you have a question, please raise your hand at an appropriate stopping point rather than asking a neighbor.

Zoom Rehearsal Etiquette

- Join Zoom rehearsal on time, with video camera on. The Zoom link is available on the HDH Member website, or contact hdhreno@gmail.com if you have not received a link.
- Unless the rehearsal is being conducted entirely on Zoom (no in-person option), virtual participants will be listening in to the rehearsal rather than fully participating. Virtual participants can use the chat box for questions or comments.

Accountability Recordings

We use an evaluation process to build our individual skills and make sure we're prepared to perform or compete. The process is gentle but it does take members a few minutes for each song and requires a technical component. There are resources available to assist with every step of the process.

And Dancing?

The visual component is very important to what we do. While we do use movement to enhance the music, most of the time we ask for natural freedom in the body. A few songs in our rep will include "planned moves" or light choreography. No dance experience is required - we all learn together.

Competition

High Desert Harmony is the Reno chapter of Sweet Adelines International, an organization of more than 20,000 women singers worldwide. HDH is part of SAI's Region 12, and we look forward to competing with other choruses in our region each year. Competition is also a great opportunity to benchmark our progress and define our path for the coming year. Participation is not required, but it is strongly encouraged, and much of the spring is dedicated to preparation.

Chorus Administration

Our chorus is managed by Standing Rules that are maintained by the Management Team and approved by all members in good standing. We rely on member volunteers to be our administrative and musical leaders. This ranges from marketing to financial management, leading a section, and taking on small jobs. This is an opportunity to develop skills and to share the experiences each of us brings to the table. Administrative support is appreciated but not required. We understand and respect the "Chorus/Life Balance" outlined above.

We're always happy to answer questions; reach out to HDHReno@gmail.com at any time.



PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

GUEST > PROSPECT > MEMBER

1. FIRST VISIT

Your first visit is intended to be a chance to get a feel for our culture, our music, and our members. We urge guests to let go of expectations and just take it all in. We'll follow up with an email to help guests understand next steps.

2. PROSPECTIVE MEMBER SITE

After your first visit, you'll be granted access to the "Prospective Member" page of our website. That's where you'll access material to learn more about membership in the chorus, the audition process, and contact information to help answer all your questions.

3. LEARN THE AUDITION SONG

With your prospective member login, you'll have access to sheet music and learning media for our audition song. Use the provided "Tips for Learning New Music" and take time to learn as accurately as you can. Once you're comfortable, you're welcome to stand with the chorus when we sing that song and record yourself as you sing along. This will help you identify the areas that still need work.

4. PASS YOUR AUDITION

Record yourself singing the audition song with the chorus. The threshold for a "pass" is 5 or fewer wrong notes. Once you feel you have a recording with 5 or fewer errors you may upload it to the website and select your Section Leader as your "checker." If there are 5 or fewer mistakes, she will notify the Music Team. If there are more than 5, she will notify you and recommend you correct the errors and record again when you're ready. You may repeat this process as many times as you'd like.

5. TEAM VOTES

The Music Team will then review and make the recommendation for membership to the Management Team which votes to accept membership.

6. PAPERWORK & PAYMENT

After approval from the Management Team, you'll be invited to join HDH. You'll be asked to complete your profile on the HDH Member website and pay the initial membership payment (unless waived).

7. WELCOME TO HDH!

Once everything is final and official, we'll formally welcome you to the group as a member, give you access to the full member section of our website, and set you up with other resources to get started. Yippie!