



How to Form a CincySings Choir

So, you're thinking of competing in CincySings. AWESOME!

You probably have questions. This step-by-step guide to forming a CincySings choir will answer them. However, if you still have questions after reading this, that's GREAT! We want you to ask us anything and everything until you're comfortable.

For now, read on for everything you'll need to get you from "What is this?" to "And the winner is..."

Quick Glance Summary

Step 1: Find a CincySings Leader/Champion

- This is either you or someone you identify through your network or HR department

Step 2: Recruit Members!

- Send emails, put up posters, post on intranet to find between 4 – 20 choir members
- Find folks who were in choir (shower singers count!), dance, or music at some point
- Be sure to fill the roles of Music Director and Choreographer if possible

Step 3: Find a Rehearsal Space

- Find a conference room, cafeteria, storage room, etc. anywhere that is open and convenient!

Step 4: Choose Your Song

- Be sure to check the websites listed for sheet music and backing tracks before choosing

Step 5: Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse

- Practice makes perfect!

Step 6: Plan your Public Performance (Required)

- Schedule your performance at your company's ArtsWave kick-off, finale, or whenever you can get a good audience in a room

Step 7: Go to CincySings Semi-Finals

- Mark your calendar for March 15 and give it your all!

Step 8: Go to CincySings Finals (Hopefully!)

- Mark your calendar for April 8 (Rehearsal) and 9 (Show); go for the gold!

Detailed Guide

Step 1: Find a CincySings Leader/Champion

Since you're reading this, that's probably YOU! You rock! If that's not you, reach out to your HR team to figure out who in the company is 'musically inclined,' or if you know someone, bring them on board! This may require leadership to sign off so make sure to get the appropriate approvals to start the search.

The leader doesn't need to be the "director" or the "choreographer," (more on that later) they just need to be the one who takes charge of scheduling, delegating tasks, and communication.

Step 2: Recruit Members!

You can't have a choir of one, you'll need teammates (3 - 19 more to be exact)! This means you'll have to recruit members. Don't worry though, in surveys we've taken, almost everyone says this is actually the easiest part. If it isn't, don't give up! You'll find some choir nerds just like you (and me!) to turn out the melodies.

How to Recruit:

You can use the materials below to communicate, or feel free to get creative and make your own! These can be found in the CincySings toolkit at artswave.org/cincysings.

- Choir/Singer Recruitment Email Template
- Poster Advertisement
- Customizable logos to create your own posters and materials

Who to Recruit:

Try to recruit people with some sort of performance background; including singing (shower singers welcome!), dance, music, etc. You'll be able to use all of those talents when putting together your performance. Here are a few "roles" you may want to think about trying to fill during the recruitment period:

Music director or piano player: While you will most likely be singing to a backing track or a cappella (depending on what song you choose), learning songs is a lot easier when you have someone to "plunk" parts on a piano and/or play along at rehearsals. This person can either be a singer in the choir, play for the choir, or merely be a rehearsal pianist.

NOTE: *You do NOT need this if you can't find someone! Past solutions have been:*

- Find a piano player to record each part and then distribute those recordings for people to learn. The time commitment for the piano player to do this is about 15 minutes total so **this is a GREAT option!** If you can't find anyone who plays piano, let us know and we'll help you find one.
- Just listen to the song over and over and pick it up that way. This is less efficient but has been done in the past (in fact, the 2017 CincySings Grand Champion did it this way!)

Choreographer: You do not need choreography, but all the champion choirs have had some sort of dancing or staging. You don't need someone who does it professionally (in fact, that's actually against the rules!), just someone who was a dancer or in theatre and understands how to create some moves or stage pictures.

NOTE: *You do NOT need this if you can't find someone! Past solutions have been:*

- If you're singing a cappella, minimal movement is usually better so you can make sure to stay on pitch with each other.
- Check out YouTube for the music video of the song or of other choirs doing it and ~~steal~~ borrow choreography from that! (MANY groups have done this!)
- As a group, come up with some simple staging. This can be as simple as moving into different formations to fit each section of the song.

IMPORTANT: The CincySings rules stipulate that a choir must have between 4-20 members, so make sure to stay within that range!

Step 3: Find a Rehearsal Space

Does your company have a theater? Probably not (if it does though... use that!). Other spaces that can be great for rehearsing are:

- Conference Room, Storage Room, Cafeteria (after hours), Break Room, etc. Get creative with your space. Most companies will have something suitable if you look hard enough. Talk to your HR department or whoever schedules rooms to find something great!
 - o Try to find a space with hard floors as this will approximate the stage better, however, your #1 goal is to find any space that's **convenient!**
- Don't have a space at all? That's ok! Let us know and we'll work with you to find an alternative.

Step 4: Choose Your Song

What songs do you like? What songs do your kids like? What songs would sound good sung by a choir? You'd be surprised, MOST songs sound great when sung with multiple voices. It's helpful to make sure you can get both sheet music and backing tracks (if needed) for your song, so be sure to check the following websites before getting your heart set on a song.

- Helpful sites for sheet music:
 - o www.musicnotes.com/choral
 - o www.jwpepper.com
 - o www.sheetmusicplus.com
- Helpful sites for backing tracks and rehearsal tracks:
 - o www.karaoke-version.com (seems to be the best)
 - o itunes.apple.com/us/genre/music-karaoke/id52
 - o itunes.apple.com/us/artist/backing-tracks-minus-vocals
- Google is your friend, this list is just to get you started!
- Feel free to change lyrics to be about your company, Cincinnati, your group, or anything else that may be funny or interesting!
- Here are some examples of successful songs that have been sung in the past
 - o 'Sing' by Pentatonix; 'Love Runs Out' by OneRepublic; 'Joyful, Joyful' from Sister Act; 'California Dreamin' (with lyrics changed to be Cincinnati-focused) by The Mama's and the Papas; 'You Raise Me Up' by Josh Groban; Medleys of Michael Jackson, Beatles and other pop music

Step 5: Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse

Practice makes perfect, right? You'll want to look and sound your best, so rehearsal is a MUST.

- Set rehearsal times so that everyone can come. Duh. Usually this means right after work or during lunch. We recommend 1 ½ hour rehearsals, 2-4 times per month depending on when you're starting this process. As you get closer to the sing-off, you'll need to adjust your rehearsals as needed.
- Assign Homework! If you've recorded your vocal parts (which we suggest you do!), send everyone home with the assignment that in two weeks (for example) everyone must be memorized when they come into rehearsal. You'll find that most people will take it seriously.

NOTE: Keep in mind that this is like any other commitment, if people treat rehearsals as optional, the experience will not be ideal. Let folks know that this can be AWESOME, but only if they are diligent about showing up and putting in a solid effort.

Step 6: Plan your Public Performance (Required)

Why do we have you do this? Because your company is not holding a sing-off (an internal mini-CincySings), you don't have the chance to perform before the Semi-Finals. By scheduling a public performance, you are able to

work out the kinks before you compete! Also, although it's a formality, this allows ArtsWave staff to make sure you're ready to move on to the actual competition. Here are examples of what some companies have done:

- Perform at your company's ArtsWave kick-off! **This is by far the most popular choice.**
- Schedule time in the lunchroom and put up posters to get your coworkers there.
- Schedule time in any large room, then get buy-in from leadership to show up and advertise for it. The ArtsWave representative can then talk about the campaign and the competition.
- Perform in your lobby for passersby (not ideal, but will do if necessary).
- Go crazy and perform out in public! You can literally perform anywhere! As long as you can schedule it, get some people to attend and plug in any equipment you may need, the sky is the limit.

Step 7: Go to CincySings Semi-Finals

You're ready to compete! By this point, you will have been in touch with Ryan Strand or Andre DuBois (Producers, CincySings) and you will have information regarding technical aspects, dates, times, etc. for the Semi-Finals. But until then, the following will let you know what to expect. (this is obviously subject to change!)

- Calendar Info:
 - March 15, 2019 at 3pm in the Jarson-Kaplan Theatre at The Aronoff (Dress Rehearsal will be that morning, most likely beginning at 11am)
- Technical Info:
 - Four (4) stationary mics for choir sound, plus two (2) handheld solo mics
 - Playable stage area is 28' wide x 15' deep with the mics across the front evenly spaced (example – mic 1 is at 3.5 ft from stage left, mic 2 is 10.5 ft from stage left)
 - NO video/PowerPoint capability (this WILL be available for the Finals, however)
- Tickets/Seating
 - Tickets will be available at a low price for purchase beginning a month before the show.
 - Choir members will NOT sit in the seats. You will be backstage in dressing rooms. This way, your friends and family can all fit! We will TRY to get video monitors for you to see the performances

Step 8: Go to CincySings Finals (Hopefully!)

Congratulations! You've made it past the Semi's and you're in the big show! You'll have all the info you need by this point so just make sure your performance is the best it can be and get a HUGE cheering section out at Music Hall!

- Calendar Info:
 - April 8 and 9 at Music Hall (Dress rehearsal on the 8th from 4-8pm, show on the 9th at 7pm)
- Technical Info:
 - Info to come regarding mics and playable area (most likely 3 solo handheld mics and an unknown number of non-moveable choir mics)
 - *There WILL be video/PowerPoint capabilities* so have the choirs think about what they'd like to have projected behind them.
- Tickets/Seating:
 - Tickets will be available at discounted rates for coworkers, friends, and family of participating companies. Tickets will also be available to the public.
 - Choir members WILL be seated in the house, this way they'll see the rest of the performances!

That's it! Hopefully this step-by-step guide has been helpful and answered your initial questions. However, if you find that you have more, that's awesome! We encourage you to ask as many questions as you need until you're comfortable with the competition.

Helpful Links

- ArtsWave YouTube channel: [youtube.com/user/TheArtsWave](https://www.youtube.com/user/TheArtsWave)
 - We encourage you to check out performances from the last few years so you'll have a better idea of what the competition is all about!

- ArtsWave CincySings page: ArtsWave.org/CincySings
 - o We'll post some rudimentary info here, so keep checking back for updates
 - o The toolkit linked at the bottom contains rules, scoring guidelines, marketing materials, etc. Everything you need to execute your competition!
- Producers: Ryan Strand; Ryan.Strand@ArtsWave.org; 513-632-0148 & Andre DuBois; Andre.DuBois@ArtsWave.org; 513-632-0133
 - o Email or call with ANY questions you have!