



Oakland Interfaith Family of Choirs

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

UPDATED
August 2023

THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT

Please find the most updated version at www.oigc.org/governance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In April 2000, the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir received a Hewlett grant to develop a long-term strategic plan. The development of this handbook was one of the organizational structure goals listed in the resulting plan. Beginning February 2001, many choir members provided valuable input, and the first version was distributed to choir members in November 2002. In March 2008, this handbook was updated with policy revisions and included, with help from charter members, dates of memorable performances and song lists. Additional institutional work was conducted in 2012 around our organization's mission, vision, and values. In 2019, with three distinct ensembles (OIGC, OIYC, and OICC), the need for a combined choir handbook was becoming evident. Several staff and volunteer contributors worked on it during the COVID pause of 2021.

After a major revision in 2022, this update reflects changes as of the Summer of 2023 as we welcome back singers and once again invite new members to join our community.

This document would not exist without tremendous gifts of time and talent from dozens of volunteers and staff over the years. Our deepest thanks to everyone who has contributed to this handbook over the years. Your support helps our organization run smoothly.

SPECIAL THANKS

Kathleen Quinlan, Annette Coffey, Paul Kim, John Dalzell, Mike Devries, Lynne Gurewitz, Norine Smith, Barbara Davis, Isa S. Chu, Maren Amdal, Leola Clark, La Nell Martin, Terrance Kelly, and many others.

CONTACT INFO

Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, Inc.

1212 Preservation Park Way, #200 – Oakland, CA 94612

www.oigc.org • admin@oigc.org • (510) 839-4361

EIN: 94-3123450

2. ABOUT OIGC HISTORY

Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir:

The Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir was born out of a gospel music workshop led by the exuberant Terrance Kelly at Living Jazz's Jazz Camp West. Founded in 1986 and becoming independent in 1991, our 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization weaves together several hundred singers from a wide range of ages, faiths, races, and cultures across multiple choirs.

The namesake Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir (**OIGC**) has an active roster of 70-80 singers. The Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir (**OIYC**), created in 1997, provides musical, educational, and social opportunities for Bay Area youth, ages 12-17, as well as the chance for mentoring and college scholarships. The non-audition Oakland Interfaith Community Choir (**OICC**) began in 2013 with 30 singers, and now boasts a roster of 180 singers rehearsing once a month and performing several times throughout the year.

In 2021, due to the pandemic, the virtual Oakland Interfaith World Choir (**OIWC**) was formed and continues to organize projects each year. The summer of 2022 saw the acquisition of the Oakland Youth Chorus (**OYC**), bolstering OIGC's youth program and outreach. Fall 2022 was the pilot year of the Oakland Interfaith Kids Choir (**OIKC**), serving ages 5-11.

Oakland Youth Chorus:

The Oakland Youth Chorus was established in 1974 to celebrate diverse communities through song. With the goal to build and foster multicultural understanding and respect, OYC brings together East Bay children and youth ages 7–17 from different neighborhoods and cultural backgrounds.

The Oakland Youth Chorus provides Bay Area students with comprehensive music education. Combining repertoire from cultures around the world, performance opportunities, and a concrete foundation in music literacy, singers support their communities with performances for local schools, organizations, and cultural events each season.

A newly combined organization:

Following a thorough review by each organization's board of directors, OIGC accepted an invitation from OYC to become its acquisition partner. OIGC's acquisition of OYC embraces a legacy choral program with an outstanding reputation and expertise in serving the youth of Oakland and the surrounding areas to its program roster, leveraging OIGC's strong leadership and infrastructure. Initial discussions began in September 2021 and continued through a months-long courtship. The final decision came in the Spring, and our official announcement of merger was made in May 2022 to our shared community. The review process took six months under the guidance of a task force made up of leadership from both organizations. OIGC worked with legal and nonprofit consultants throughout the first year to ensure a smooth transition, supported by a generous Operational Efficiency grant from the Hewlett Foundation. Our combined organization now supports two adult choirs, five youth choirs, two performing ensembles, and one virtual ensemble, with the combined support of seven staff and 15 board members.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

The mission of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir is to inspire joy and unity among all people through Black gospel and spiritual music traditions.

WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION BY:

- performing Black gospel and spirituals with a diverse group of people
- creating and maintaining a culture of inclusion
- modeling and inspiring unity by the diversity of our membership and our joyful performance
- providing young people with positive youth development opportunities rooted in spiritual and gospel music education
- delivering a musical experience to institutionalized and underserved audiences, including performances at prisons, shelters, and schools
- serving the general public with free and low-cost performances
- performing at public, artistic, faith, and commercial events
- assisting other nonprofit organizations in their outreach efforts
- bringing together a culturally and ethnically diverse audience at self-produced outreach events
- collaborating on cross-cultural musical projects
- inspiring and educating the public about the cultural, historical, and political context of spirituals and gospel music
- engaging in special projects, including the Biennial Music Workshop, recordings, and tours
- touching hearts and minds through our performances

OIGC sees a world where all people, regardless of social biases, will tap into their own power of spirit and joy, be comfortable with each other's differences, and celebrate those differences in harmony.

WE VALUE:

- the power of the human spirit and its ability to transcend limitations and biases
- the building and sustaining of a diverse and inclusive community that embraces all people
- personal and organizational responsibility for modeling integrity, respect, and peace
- our role as a positive example within the interfaith community
- the Black gospel and spiritual music traditions
- music as a tool to educate and strengthen community

WE BELIEVE:

- that song has the power to transform lives and to unite people across differences
- that a culture of inclusion challenges each of us to be a positive agent of change
- that in striving to be a culture of inclusion we serve as a model of a greater vision for the world
- in the value of service to the community and the world
- that everyone has a unique voice, and that every voice is important
- that when communities take active responsibility for the struggles, as well as the successes, of all people, communities are more likely to thrive

RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT

As adopted by the Board of Directors, January 2021

The Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir community is committed to equality and justice for all people. This is now and has always been the core of who we are. Our commitment is realized through internal work as both an organization and employer, as well as externally through our programming and performances.

Formed on a foundation of diversity, the choir is a model of Equity and Inclusion that opens doors to participants and audiences of all backgrounds. OIGC exposes a wide array of people to this historic African American music and invites audiences to its powerful message of healing, hope, and love. Through the language of music, which transcends linguistic barriers, we bring our message of unity and joy to diverse audiences near and abroad through in-person and virtual performances.

The 2020-2021 Board of Directors continues our commitment to a culture of equity through active integration of thoughtful policies that align with the following:

- Commitment to the creation of policies that reflect democratic principles of equity and justice.
- Administration of policies, programs, and activities to identify and avoid discrimination and barriers to access.
- Institutional actions will seek to avoid adverse effects on communities of color and equity whenever possible.
- Assessment based on data collected in order to evaluate the impact of our equity goals, such as population served, race, color, national origin, and income levels, of our diverse community (members, performers, and audiences) across the Bay Area and globally.

Our music is a vehicle to bring together people who might never otherwise have an opportunity to meet, and we model our commitment to unity through every rehearsal and performance.

Building a race equity culture requires intention and effort. OIGC's commitment to this effort began with our mission statement more than 35 years ago and flows throughout our institutional policies and practices today and into the future.

STATEMENT ON INTERFAITH

*“Whenever we speak about religion or faith,
we speak to inform, not to persuade.”*

Interfaith, in its most basic sense, refers to people or groups from different religious or spiritual worldviews and traditions coming together. Interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions/faiths, or spiritual/humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels. It often involves promoting understanding between different beliefs to increase acceptance of others, rather than synthesize new beliefs.

Many people are discriminated against due to misconceptions, ignorance, and hostility based on actual or perceived religious difference. Interfaith cooperation helps stop prejudice and intolerance and deepens an individual’s own understanding of their faith and values. In our divided world, learning and connecting with others who may be different from ourselves helps strengthen our shared community.

OIGC was formed with this as a core value: we are a place for interfaith dialogue – a safe place for people from beyond the African American church community to experience the joy of Black gospel music authentically and respectfully. All participants are asked to continue this tradition.

COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY



OIGC has earned GuideStar’s Platinum Seal of Transparency

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

OIGC has made a commitment to transparency so that you can donate with confidence to an organization that is dedicated to using your dollars responsibly. Learn more about [Candid’s Seals of Transparency](#) and visit [our GuideStar profile](#) (<https://www.guidestar.org/profile/94-3123450>)

INSTITUTIONAL & HISTORICAL DATA

OIGC values transparency and seeks to support donor confidence in our organization. In addition to hosting an annual business meeting for singers, we publish organizational data here: www.oigc.org/governance.

OIGC invites anyone to learn more about our institutional position at Cause IQ, a database of information on nonprofits drawn from public and tax records: <https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/oakland-interfaith-gospel-choir,943123450/>

OIGC is a nonprofit 501(c)3 performing arts organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

3. GOVERNANCE

Please visit www.oigc.org/governance for the most current information.

The Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization, a public benefit corporation registered in the State of California. OIGC is governed by bylaws, the most current of which were revised and adopted in 2020. In addition, we govern ourselves in accordance with California law, as well as in line with our mission, vision, and values. In 2021, we adopted a Racial Equity Statement; we are working to develop a complementary Faith Equity Statement. These items and more can be found here: www.oigc.org/about

We are led by a Board of Directors, whose oversight role encompasses duties of care, inquiry, and loyalty. The function of the board is to ensure adequate financial resources are secured and stewarded, to protect assets and provide oversight, to safeguard legal and ethical integrity, to monitor and strengthen programs and services, to hire and manage executive staff, to foster and develop appropriate governance structures for the long-term success of the organization, and to serve as organizational ambassadors enhancing our public standing. The Board of Directors is supported by an Emeritus Board and staff relies also on an Advisory Committee, in addition to other volunteer committees.

The Board of Directors partners with and entrusts administrative and operational responsibility to our staff, led by an Executive Director (ED) in partnership with our founding Artistic Director (AD.) The ED is responsible for effective leadership in supporting board and staff development, fiscal responsibility, ethical and legal standards compliance, organizational development and stability, operational effectiveness and efficiencies, and positive public relations toward the fulfillment of our mission. The Board of Directors and ED support the vision of our Artistic Team, who inspires musical excellence across the organization.

Our current board and staff are listed and pictured here: www.oigc.org/team

Volunteers play a crucial role in the success of OIGC. With numerous committees and opportunities to engage, singers, family, community members and students can all get involved with OIGC through our volunteer program. www.oigc.org/volunteer

We all work in service of our mission and our community, which includes a committed, diverse group of singers, community volunteers, supporters, and audiences. Singing members in any choir or ensemble within OIGC are not members of the corporation in the legal sense and therefore cannot vote on institutional-level activities. The members of the Board of Directors constitute our statutory membership. Any reference to members or membership in this manual or our bylaws refers to choir or ensemble participants and is not intended to create or refer to statutory membership.

ANNUAL REPORT

Each year, as part of our commitment to transparency, OIGC presents information summarizing participation and performance highlights of the past year, as well as facts and figures. These can all be found at www.oigc.org/governance.

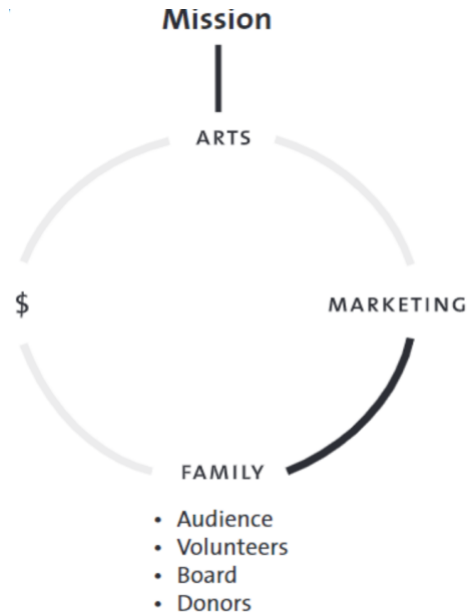
STRATEGIC PLANNING

Success for any organization depends on its ability to plan, and to respond to the vicissitudes of its environment. Over the past few years, OIGC has embraced becoming a more planful organization: *How will we achieve our mission?* During the 2021-22 fiscal year, our leadership conducted a thorough strategic planning process utilizing research methodologies and following industry best practices for analysis and decision making. The outcome was a document reflecting five strategic priorities which will support OIGC’s stability, growth, and success over the next five years. These can be viewed at www.oigc.org/governance. The next, and ongoing stage of our strategic planning work will result in action and tactical plans, including defined development and marketing campaigns, as well as overall annual implementation plans. As this is an ongoing process, adoption of a methodology is critical to long-term success. The process model we follow is below, alongside “The Cycle” from arts management expert, Michael Kaiser in his book of the same name.

Strategic Planning Process Model



The Cycle of Arts Management



OIGC’s Five-Year Strategic Priorities (2022 – 2027)

For more about our strategic plan, visit www.oigc.org/governance.

- Artistic Excellence
- Community Impact
- The OIGC Family
- Resource Development
- Operational Stability

WHO WE ARE:



Board of Directors

In 2023-2024, OIGC has volunteer leadership from 15 members on our Board of Directors. They can be reached at their OIGC email addresses, which follow this convention: first.last@oigc.org

Mathew Adjiake
Lauren Becker
Jorge Choy
Kathy Davis
Jim Fisher

Carolyn Gauthier
Nicolia Gooding
Michele Hanson
Sharon Hymes-Offord
Terrance Kelly

Monica LaBoskey
Pauline Marx
Perika Sampson
Wil Wright
Patrick Zimski

Staff

Our team features a complement of 7 dedicated professional staff, committed to service and success. They can be reached at their OIGC email address, which follow this convention: first@oigc.org.

Terrance Kelly, Founding Artistic Director
Maren Amdal, Executive Director
La Nell Martin, OYC Artistic Director

Isa S. Chu, Marketing & Programs Manager
Nevin Inthriath, Production Manager
Nikole Wilson-Ripsom, Development Manager
Ruthanne Williams, Operations Manager

For the most up-to-date information about our entire team, please visit: www.oigc.org/team.

4. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

The following information is designed to be relevant and applicable to all singers, regardless of which ensemble with which they sing. Choir-specific information is detailed both here, and later in this handbook.

ENSEMBLES OVERVIEW

With the addition of Oakland Youth Chorus in 2022, our total number of performing choirs has expanded to eight! In addition to these groups, described in the table below, select solo and ensemble opportunities are available on an auditioned, as-needed basis.

Choir	Age Group	Type of Music	Rehearsal Schedule	Annual Performances	Fee Schedule *	Uniform & Cost *
Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir	18+	Black Gospel Music	Mondays 7-10pm	35-40	Jul - Jun \$275	Robe: \$200 Formal: \$150 T-shirt: \$25
Oakland Interfaith Community Choir	13+	Black Gospel Music	3rd Saturday 3-5pm	4-5	Aug - Dec: \$150 Feb - Jun: \$150	Stole or Bowtie \$25
Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir	12-17	Black Gospel & World Music via African American Oral Tradition	Saturdays 5-6:30pm	8-10	\$450 / year Aug - May	Scarf/Bowtie: \$25 T-Shirt: \$25
Oakland Interfaith Kids Choir	5-11	Black Gospel & World Music via African American Oral Tradition	3rd Saturday 3-5pm	2-3	Aug - Dec: \$50 Feb - Jun: \$50	T-Shirt: \$25
OYC Miracles	Elementary 2-5 Grade	Secular & World music via music theory and sight singing	Mondays 4:45- 5:45pm	2-3	Sep - Dec: \$150 Jan - May: \$150	T-Shirt: \$25
OYC Concert Chorus	Middle School 5-8 Grade	Secular & World music via music theory and sight singing	Tue / Thu 4:15 - 5:30pm	5-8	Aug - Dec: \$300 Jan - May: \$300	T-Shirt: \$25
OYC Chamber Singers	High School 8-12 Grade	Secular & World music via music theory and sight singing	Tue / Thu 5:30 – 7:15pm	8-15	Aug - Dec: \$300 Jan - May: \$300	Concert Attire: \$60 T-Shirt: \$25
OIWC	All Ages	Black Gospel Music	By Project Basis	1-2	\$30 / Project	N/A

AUDITIONS

The OIGC family of choirs has both auditioned, and non-auditioned groups which singers can join.

Auditioned Choirs:

- **OIGC:** Anyone wishing to join the namesake Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir should consider auditioning. Auditions are traditionally held in February or March, with new members completing their introductory period to start as a full member at the beginning of the season.
- **OIGC Ensemble:** The Artistic Director will selectively invite OIGC members to participate in ensemble performances. These auditions and selections are solely at the AD's discretion.
- **OYC-CC:** A placement session will determine a singer's vocal range and assist the director to select appropriate voice part. The Placement Session is required to join the 5th to 9th grade OYC Concert Chorus. Select 4th graders may be included in the ensemble at the Artistic Director's discretion. Placement sessions are held in the first six weeks of the season during rehearsals.
- **OYC-CS:** Youth entering 9th to 12th grades wishing to join the OYC Chamber Singers will take part in a placement audition appointment. A Placement Audition assesses the skill level of the singer; not to exclude a singer from the ensemble. Placement Auditions are held by appointment during the first six weeks of the season.

Non-Auditioned Choirs:

- **OICC:** Anyone age 12 and older can join OICC. New singers are welcomed during the first two months of each season, August/September, and February/March.
- **OIKC:** Children ages 5-11 can join OIKC at any time.
- **OYC-Miracles:** Elementary-age children are welcome to join Miracles at any time.
- **World Choir:** These virtual periodic ensembles are open to anyone, anywhere in the world!
www.oigc.org/oiwc

Additionally, auditions will be held periodically as needed, for solos, or for participation in ensembles. As always, the Artistic Director has sole discretion over admission and placement.

ENROLLMENT

"Everybody's got a place in the choir!"

Registration

All singers who wish to participate in any ensemble must complete an annual registration process, including updating/entering personal contact and other details on their Chorus Connection profile, paying tuition/fees, and signing relevant participation agreements. Registration is not considered complete until all elements of the registration packet have been completed. Singers who are not properly registered by session deadline will be notified and cannot participate in rehearsals or performances until their registration is completed.

Singer Status

Each participant is assigned a 'status' in Chorus Connection:

1. Active statuses require registration and receives regular choir communications:
Active, Leave of Absence
2. Archival statuses do not receive choir communications:
Alumni, Moved Away, Newbie Dropout, Former Band, Former Staff, Deceased

CODE OF CONDUCT

“We are neither/nor, so we must be better than”

In addition to being a group of musicians who perform beautiful music, we are messengers and ambassadors for what is possible among all peoples when we embrace our collective diversity and refuse to allow differences to divide us. By virtue of participation in OIGC, we are all representatives of the gospel and world music, and interfaith communities at large. A singer may be asked to leave the choir if they are found to be in violation of OIGC’s code of conduct. These standards include:

Respect for the Organization

- Participants should behave in a way that upholds OIGC’s mission, values, and reputation before, during, or after any OIGC performance, rehearsal, or whenever representing OIGC -whether informally or officially- at any function.
- Participants should not make any statements to the media about OIGC business, unless expressly authorized to do so by OIGC. Requests for media statements should be referred to media@oigc.org
- Participants should not make any statements about OIGC on social media or any other public platform that may harm OIGC’s reputation.
- To ensure the professional quality of performances, participants should strive for personal excellence, including attendance at rehearsals and performances.

Respect for Each Other

- Any discriminatory, bullying behavior, or harassment of any kind towards fellow participants, staff, clients, and/or the public is unacceptable. Any participant exhibiting such behavior is subject to immediate expulsion from OIGC.
- Participants should treat rehearsal and performances venues with care and respect: observe and follow the rules of the venue, *pick up after themselves before leaving*, etc. Many spaces where we perform are places of worship. **Clothing and manner should be respectful at all times.**
- Although it is permissible and even encouraged to list a membership with OIGC on a resume or biographical publication, participants may not solicit political/professional contacts from choir activities, performances, or recording sessions to promote any separate professional goals.
- Participants should maintain an open attitude and be receptive to communication and information from other participants, section leaders, and staff.

Respect for Ourselves

- Using illegal substances or excessive alcohol is unacceptable. If a participant is discovered to be under the influence of any illegal controlled substance at any OIGC function, they will face immediate expulsion.
- Refrain from using foul language before, during, or after any OIGC performance, rehearsal, or whenever representing OIGC at any function.
- Participants should maintain uniforms and follow dress code and personal appearance guidelines, remaining clean and well-groomed. Grooming styles dictated by religion and ethnicity are not restricted.
- Communicate in a respectful manner to clients, fellow participants, staff, and the public.

Violations to the code of conduct should be reported to admin@oigc.org without delay.

REHEARSAL LOCATIONS

OIGC, OIYC, OICC, OIKC
Imani Community Church
3300 MacArthur Blvd
Oakland, 94602

Oakland Youth Chorus Ensembles
First Unitarian Church of Oakland
684 14th Street
Oakland, 94612

Oakland Youth Chorus Miracles
OIGC Office
1212 Preservation Park Way, #200
Oakland, CA 94612

TOUR OPPORTUNITIES

From time to time, choirs and ensembles within the OIGC family may be invited to perform beyond our usual Oakland-area venues. Tours are an exciting privilege, available to singers in good standing with their respective choir. Our choir family tours locally, regionally, and nationally in cultural exchange with other ensembles, festivals, and choirs. Touring strengthens bonds between our singers, expands cultural knowledge and leadership, and provides an intensive musical learning and performance experience. Past tour locations include Costa Rica, France, Denmark, Japan, Washington D.C., Hawaii, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Seattle, among others.

FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS

Each singer is asked to pay dues/tuition. The fee schedule for each group is determined based on factors including frequency and rehearsal costs. We allocate the fee schedule by participation period – annually for OIGC and OIYC, half-yearly for OICC, OIKC and OYC ensembles. **Participants are not allowed to perform unless dues are current.** Dues for all groups will be collected electronically through Chorus Connection. OIGC’s accounting team can assist with setting up payments and will support timely collection.

A sheet music fee is included in the tuition for those choirs which utilize sheet music. These fees are used to purchase lawfully licensed sheet music that will be used at rehearsals. When music is lost, it is the responsibility of the singer to whom the sheet music was assigned to replace any copies that are missing at the end of each session.

Participants may meet their dues obligations through one of the following methods.

- Annually/Seasonally: A one-time payment
- Monthly: Automatic payments can be set up in the Payment Center in Chorus Connection.
- Financial Assistance: *See below.*

Financial Assistance

Regardless of financial circumstances, we work to ensure that all who wish to sing with us can do so. To support access for all, OIGC is committed to supporting subsidies for singers’ dues/tuition, uniforms, and more to help ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in our full range of activities and events. Our financial assistance materials are made available to anyone: posted on our website and provided with registration packets. Since OIGC cannot loan money, these subsidies are considered a grant, not a loan.

Currently, full subsidies are not available. Choir members are expected to pay at **least 50% of costs** related to participation. Subsidies are made possible by generous support from donors and foundation funding. Additionally, OIGC institutionally subsidizes participants through dues waiver, as needed. We welcome singers to sponsor fellow singers, a participant in our youth program, or donate to our chorus Financial Aid Fund at www.oigc.org/donate.

Financial assistance requests are for one participation period. Participants may submit a Request for Financial Assistance at any time as hardships arise. Applications are confidential and will be reviewed and approved by the finance team with input from the applicable Artistic Director. The applicants' overall historical attendance/dues payment/code of conduct records will be reviewed to help assess eligibility for financial assistance. **Singers who are not in good standing may be ineligible to receive financial assistance.** Singers on performance probation are not eligible to apply.

Dues subsidies will be administered by our accounting department.

Singers who receive financial assistance will be asked to support the organization in other ways, such as assisting with tasks or projects as needed. Opportunities will be communicated by email, such as:

- Assisting with load-in and set-up at rehearsals and performance
- Volunteering at fundraising activities and events
- Assisting with office or clerical functions

Touring Funds Assistance

For tours that are not fully sponsored and subsidized, a travel budget will be determined at least six months before the scheduled trip. Applications for travel assistance will be accepted approximately two months before the scheduled departure date. At this time, full subsidies are not available and tour participants are expected to pay at least 50% of their travel cost obligation. The applicants' overall historical attendance/dues payment/code of conduct records will be reviewed to help assess eligibility for financial assistance. Singers who are not in good standing may be ineligible to receive financial assistance. Singers on performance probation are not eligible.

COMMUNICATIONS

Internal Communications

Chorus Connection – <https://app.chorusconnection.com>

Chorus Connection is the online platform singing members of all ensembles will use to manage their individual participation. From registration, calendars, dues & attendance, to learning music, sharing community events with your peers, Chorus Connection is your one-stop-shop for all OIGC-related participant activity.

After you receive your email invitation for Chorus Connection, please activate your account by following the link within the email. If you have not received an email after some time, please check your spam folder before contacting the Choir Coordinator. After signing in, complete your profile information and explore the numerous resources available to you on the site. All participants are asked to pay their dues through the Chorus Connection Payments Center.

The roster on Chorus Connection is an important resource and is for internal use only – learning who your section-mates are, contacting new friends, etc. The information contained there is confidential and may not be shared outside of each choir or used for professional or promotional purposes.

Regular email updates are sent to each ensemble via Chorus Connection. (Be sure “chorusconnection.com” is added to your email’s safe-senders list.) In addition to email communications, singers can stay informed through the Chorus Connection calendars and dashboard, and announcements made in-person at rehearsals.

External Communications

All OIGC participants are ambassadors and have a duty to promote a positive public image of our shared organization. This image is dependent upon participants behaving in a manner consistent with OIGC's mission, vision, and values and upholding our commitments to each other.

- **Interacting with the Media:** Singers must refrain from commenting to the media as official representatives. Participants should refer media inquiries to media@oigc.org in a timely manner.
- **Political Endorsements:** As a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, OIGC may not endorse any political candidate or partisan issue and does not typically participate in political campaigns. However, exceptions can be made by the executive staff and Board of Directors for booking inquiries for fee-for-service performances at certain types of events. As individuals, choir members have every right to express their opinions. However, political announcements and/or endorsements will not be verbally expressed in rehearsals or printed in newsletters.
- **Social Networking:** Participants are encouraged to follow and share OIGC/OYC's social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and more. Participants are reminded that these are public pages and not an internal network, so it is necessary to adhere to the above media guidelines and confidential information. Participants should follow our code of conduct on OIGC's official online profiles, and refrain from posting inflammatory and/or controversial sentiments to these profiles and their content streams. At times, there may be negative comments of "online trolls" posting hateful messages on our social media platforms. Participants should not respond to them and report these messages immediately to media@oigc.org. Find all OIGC's social media links and sign up to receive OIGC newsletters at www.oigc.org/contact.

USE OF IMAGES

Image / Sound Capture and Use

OIGC is a vibrant arts organization, and our activities translate well through both still and moving images, and audio recording. A visual presence is important for the promotion of the choirs in media publicity, our website, grant proposals and reports, and archival records. These images and video clips are an essential method of communicating our activities both in marketing and promotions of OIGC to our audiences, as well as in reporting our activities to funders. Participants may be filmed or photographed during rehearsals and performances. These images are considered institutional property. Participation in our choirs and activities implies permission for OIGC to use your image in photos and video in perpetuity. We strive to choose the best images of the choirs in rehearsal and performance representative of our professional standard. Exceptions for use of media images, especially of children, can be made if the parent/guardian contacts OIGC with concerns about specific uses of their child/ward's image. Please contact media@oigc.org.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

"We care on the side of caution."

The OIGC family of choirs welcomes all people, regardless of background or ability. OIGC is committed to the health and safety of our employees, our volunteers, our singers, and all those who work around them. Singing is a physical activity and as such, rehearsing and performing with OIGC has certain physical requirements. OIGC is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment and we take necessary precautions to ensure the opportunity for healthy participation. Participation in any OIGC activity is implicitly expressing both willingness and ability to engage healthfully. Participants are expected to be responsible for their own health and well-being. If a participant is uncomfortable with any of these physical requirements, please inform your Choir Coordinator or Section Leader immediately.

Participants should:

- be physically comfortable with the posture, audio, and respiratory requirements of singing
- be physically comfortable with movements and choreography of their respective ensemble
- be aware that proximity to other singers during performances and rehearsals may result in respiratory exchange and/or close physical contact with other singers
- be comfortable standing for long periods of time (45 minutes to 1.5 hours without break)
- be able to quickly navigate stairs and stages, and the passages to those places, which may not have accommodations for persons with limited mobility
- understand that performance schedule and call times can be physically demanding (multiple performances back-to-back, early morning call, small back-stage space with limited chairs, etc.)
- may need to be able to hold a music folder for long periods

Accommodations

OIGC is committed to seeking and providing reasonable accommodation when possible. While we welcome requests, it may not be practical or feasible to deliver all accommodations. Requests are more likely to be met with advanced notice, preferably not less than two weeks prior to the activity. Some accommodations are relatively standard and will be provided routinely. Examples of past reasonable accommodations have included: seating near the stage entrance for singers with limited mobility, assistance moving on/off stage, caregiver access to rehearsals and backstage, recordings of music for participants with visual impairments, and similar. Some accommodation requests will not be achievable due to venue or other event limitations.

COVID-19 & Related Health Safety Requirements

Singing has been identified as a high-risk activity for respiratory exchange. The COVID-19 virus and other respiratory illnesses may impact future OIGC activities. COVID-19 and other vaccines are both safe and highly effective at preventing transmission. Our COVID and other health safety protocols will be routinely reviewed and updated to reflect current public health guidelines and recommendations of best practice from experts. These protocols are available on our website at www.oigc.org/governance and on Chorus Connection. Any changes will be communicated.

As of May 2023:

- OIGC *strongly encourages* all singers to be **fully vaccinated and boosted**. Vaccination status submission is no longer compulsory.
- OIGC will continue to *strongly recommend* **wearing well-fitted masks** during rehearsals and performances. As mask mandates have been lifted, we will no longer enforce mandatory masking. We recognize individuals may prefer to remain masked. A black singers mask is a welcome addition to any performance uniform.
- OIGC requests you please continue to **notify us** (health@oigc.org) if you test positive **within 48 hours** of participating in any OIGC activity. We continue to *care on the side of caution*, and it is important people have an opportunity to know about potential exposure. We will continue to maintain discretion in communications.
- OIGC will collect attendance information to comply with our regular performance policies. These may be used for contract tracing, as appropriate.
- OIGC will continue to provide opportunities for social distancing at in-person rehearsal spaces. ZOOM-accessible rehearsals are available for OIGC *only*. Minimum in-person rehearsal requirements still apply, per this Handbook.
- Executive Staff will continue to monitor the public health environment. We will communicate and adjust these protocols as appropriate.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is in the best interest of OIGC to be aware of and properly manage all actual and perceived conflicts of interest. The Board of Directors has adopted and will maintain a conflict-of-interest policy designed to help directors, officers, employees, and volunteers of the organization identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest, and to provide the organization with a procedure to appropriately manage such conflicts in accordance with legal requirements and the organization's goals of accountability and transparency. The full Conflict of Interest Policy is available on request.

Conflict of Interest Defined:

In this policy, a person with a conflict of interest is referred to as an "interested person." For purposes of this policy, the following circumstances shall be deemed to create a conflict of interest:

When a director, officer, employee, or volunteer, including a board member, or a family member of any of these:

- is a party to a contract or involved in a transaction with the organization for goods or services.
- has a material financial interest in a transaction between the organization and an entity in which they are a director, officer, agent, partner, associate, employee, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, or other legal representative.
- is engaged in some capacity or has a material financial interest in a business or enterprise that competes with the organization.

Other situations may create the appearance of a conflict or present a duality of interests in connection with a person who has influence over the activities or finances of the nonprofit. All such circumstances should be disclosed to the board or staff, as appropriate, and a decision made as to what course of action the organization or individuals should take so that the best interests of the nonprofit are not compromised by any personal interests of stakeholders.

CONFIDENTIALITY / NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

While participating or volunteering with OIGC, participants may obtain knowledge and information which is confidential and proprietary to OIGC and may work with property owned by OIGC. Information contained in OIGC computers, cloud-storage, databases, and other records (including but not limited to information about volunteer leaders, employees, grantors, supporters, customers, vendors, programs, history, program and business plans, and budgets) is confidential and proprietary. Unauthorized release of confidential and proprietary information can be harmful to OIGC and its programs as well as to third parties and the persons releasing said information. Participants may not privately use or disclose any proprietary or confidential information regarding OIGC and our programs.

ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

Whenever choir members disagree with a decision made regarding policy or participant agreement violations, they may request a review and reconsideration of that decision. Appeals may be submitted by email to admin@oigc.org and must provide the following information:

- A brief outline of the details related to the original decision
- Substantial reasons why the decision should be changed
- A suggested solution/remedy

Appeals will be reviewed by at least one staff member and one member of the Board. These parties will be selected by the Artistic Director of the relevant ensemble, or by the Executive Director as appropriate.

A determination will be reached and reviewed by the applicable Artistic Director, who has authority to accept or reject the determination. Select reconsideration requests may be escalated to the Board, depending on relevant details. Some decisions will remain the purview of the Artistic Director. (See Section 5. Artistic Decisions, below.) All decisions reached by the Board of Directors are final.

TIME PARAMETERS

Participants should submit their appeals within two weeks of any adverse action notification. A decision will be rendered within two weeks of the appeal being submitted. During the appeal process, choir members must comply with participant agreements and probationary limitations. Choir members will be notified of decisions in writing within three weeks of the appeal being submitted.

WHO DO I ASK ABOUT...

We want to help you get the answers you need to succeed! When in doubt, contact admin@oigc.org.

- **Dues** – Accounting: accounting@oigc.org
- **Financial Assistance** – Membership Committee Chair
- **Volunteering** – Operations Manager: ruthanne@oigc.org
- **Social Media-related** – Marketing & Programs Manager: isa@oigc.org
- **Donations** – Development Manager: nikole@oigc.org
- **Rehearsals** – Choir Leadership, esp. Section Leaders per Chorus Connection
- **Attendance** – Admin Section Leader per Chorus Connection
- **Chorus Connection** – Admin Section Leader: *various* or Operations Manager: ruthanne@oigc.org
- **Performance info** – Check email and Chorus Connection. Then, Section Leader.
- **Music:**
 - Words/pitches/etc. – Musical Section Leader
 - Repertoire/other – Chorus Connection
- **Uniform** – Uniform Coordinator
- **Prayer Requests** - Ministerial Team/s
- **Institution-related:** Executive Director: maren@oigc.org or member of the board (see www.oigc.org/team)
- **Other** choir-specific questions or concerns - Administrative Section Leader

5. ARTISTIC DECISIONS

MUSIC SELECTION

OIGC has a talented artistic team which oversees our exemplary musicianship and inspiring performances. Founding Artistic Director Terrance Kelly leads this charge, which includes paid and volunteer choir and ensemble directors, band members and musicians, musical section leaders, production and sound talent, and many others. La Nell Martin is Artistic Director for the Oakland Youth Chorus ensembles, and oversees our youth program institution wide, as well as the artistic talents which support OYC. We rely on the experience and artistic vision of our Artistic Directors for all decisions related to artistic process, products, and performances.

*“It’s not all ‘Jesus’ music, but we do sing gospel.
He’s bound to show up from time to time!”*

The Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir community sings Black gospel music, including negro spirituals, traditional, contemporary, and original gospel music including gospelized Christmas tunes, and classics. Songs are taught primarily in the oral tradition, through call and response.

The Oakland Youth Chorus repertoire consists primarily of secular music, while paying homage to the roots of all non-indigenous American music by incorporating negro spirituals and work songs. Sheet music is often used in OYC, and music theory education is integrated into the learning.

Song selection, soloists, and ensemble group selections are at the discretion of the Artistic Director of each ensemble. It is the goal of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir to embrace and support all music regardless of faith or beliefs and to be inclusive and transparent when selecting music for the choirs.

Considerations are made to provide the most inclusive experience for singers of any, all, or no faith tradition. However, there will be times when song lyrics draw specifically from Christian or other religious imagery and experience. Participants are invited to mentally substitute images of their own faith, while enjoying the musical experience.

SELF-PRODUCED EVENTS

OIGC produces several concerts featuring and highlighting our different ensembles, most notably our Annual Holiday Concert traditionally held the first Saturday of December. Other events include Black History Month celebrations, the Annual Free Spring Concert, a new Juneteenth series, and end-of-the-school-year event celebrating our high school-aged youth. You can find the complete season calendar at www.oigc.org/calendar.

Singers performing in self-produced concerts do not need to purchase a ticket. Audience seating may not always be available for every performer, but we endeavor to provide seats for singers when not on stage. Guardians, parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, and colleagues will need to purchase tickets to our concerts. Accommodation requests for those with caregivers are welcome and will most often be honored. Depending on the performance and venue, volunteers will be coordinated in advance for backstage supervision of minors.

Singers are our first and best resource for performance promotion. **Thank you in advance for helping to sell tickets to concerts in which you perform!**

OUTREACH & BOOKING

In addition to our calendar of self-produced performances, OIGC receives many requests to appear at a wide variety of special events. Performing at these events can generate income as well as being another way for us to further our mission and support our community. For corporate and private events, OIGC usually receives a performance fee. These fees vary depending on numerous factors, including but not limited to the date/time, the event size/scale, the length of performance requested, proximity to Oakland, the type of music requested, the entity/organization making the request, and the like. OIGC also performs at numerous community events, festivals, benefits, and memorials for a nominal amount to cover base expenses. All performance requests must be made by filling out the bookings form on our website, here: <https://www.oigc.org/booking>

Performers for these outreach performances will be selected at the sole discretion of the Artistic Director overseeing the performance, in coordination with the Production Manager. If a singer wishes to be considered, they may make their interest known to the Artistic Director via email.

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

P-L-P:

Directors PRESENT the music, singers go home and LEARN the music, we come together to PERFECT the music

DO:

- Arrive on time
- Be prepared with a recording device, and ready to take notes
- Be attentive and silent while the Artistic Director or section leader is presenting music in rehearsals and while working with sectionals
- Sing out! Rehearsals are the time to make mistakes
- Practice at home. Take time to work on music outside of rehearsal time (~30 minutes a day). This ensures that the group can collectively move forward in excellence
- Maintain current dues payments
- Get to know other choir members before and after rehearsal time

DO NOT:

- Engage in disruptive and distracting behavior, such as talking loudly, or using mobile devices for purposes not related to rehearsal
- Wear fragrances of any kind

PERFORMANCE/RECORDING SESSION EXPECTATIONS

DO:

- Hydrate! Bring your own self-care kit as appropriate
- Arrive on time in appropriate dress code
- Be present and listen to your directors and choir coordinators
- Be patient during long stretches between call time, soundcheck, and show time
- Pay attention to your surroundings
- Be silent while lining up, standing in line to go on stage, and on stage.
- Sing out and have fun!
- Wear deodorant, preferably not perfumed

DO NOT:

- Wear fragrances of any kind
- Wave from the stage or otherwise communicate with people in the audience
- Engage in acts that are distracting or that draw audience attention (e.g. excessive movement, looking around at other choir members, rubbing your face, playing with your hair, etc.)
- Argue or question instructions. If unclear, respectfully request clarity from an appropriate person
- Approach celebrities without consent of staff
- Take unauthorized photos of celebrities or other singers without permission.
- Bring excess personal items with you – plan accordingly, pack lightly

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

It is imperative that participants are on time and present for all rehearsals and performances. When a singer is missing, the group suffers musically and mentally. Please make every attempt to commit yourself to be present for every rehearsal and performance. Absences due to religious/sacred observances should be communicated with the Choir Coordinator and are not counted against a singer's participation record. Performance opportunities and dates will be communicated as soon as information becomes available. Performances scheduled six weeks in advance are mandatory. The Artistic Director retains discretion over participation in performances. Choir-specific attendance requirements are listed under Section 7, *Choir Specific Information*.

UNIFORM/DRESS CODE EXPECTATIONS

Professionalism is a hallmark in all OIGC choirs and ensembles, both in how we sound and how we look. Please wear your concert uniforms with pride and follow directions about changes to make sure each ensemble looks their best.

- Uniforms are designed, selected, and approved by the Artistic Directors.
- All new singers are required to purchase uniforms. Uniforms are required and must be paid in full before new singers can perform with the choir.
- We cannot accept returns or exchanges. We can support inactive singers who need to resell their uniform by posting availability in member communications. We do accept for re-use donations of used uniforms in good condition from former singers.
- Comply with all street clothes, attire, and uniform requirements specified for each performance. This standard applies before, during, and after each performance and all the while you are at any performance location.
- Treat your uniform with respect. Do not sit in grass or otherwise soil your uniform. Do not drink alcohol or smoke at any time while wearing your uniform.
- If at any performance, your street clothes attire/uniform attire/personal hygiene is determined to be incorrect, incomplete, unkempt, or unacceptable, you will not be able to sing with the choir during that performance. An attire repair kit and iron are frequently available at performances. Final determination at each performance remains with the Artistic Director.

Caring for Your Uniform

- You are required keep your uniforms in excellent condition.
- You are responsible for all repairs or alterations that are necessary after initial fitting / purchase.
- When enroute to/from a performance, robes must remain stored in a protective garment bag.
- At home, keep your uniforms on hangers and dry clean (preferred) or launder them regularly.
- Guardians should ensure proper fit and cleanliness of youth participant uniforms. Please ensure that your singer has not outgrown their uniform within the first month of rehearsals.

6. OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

OIGC is here because of the generous support of our volunteers, donors, supporters, and singers. There are numerous ways to support your favorite choral organization! Here are just a few:

- **JOIN, SING, RECRUIT:** By participating in rehearsals and performances, by paying dues and telling your friends about concerts, you add tremendously to our community. We are all that we are because of the individuals who share their time, talent, and treasure. Tell a friend!
- **INVITE FRIENDS & FAMILY:** Friends and family are our first and best audience; Neighbors and acquaintances, too! Invite everyone you know to attend concerts, volunteer, and join you as a participant in any of our ensembles or activities.
- **DONATE:**
 - **Campaigns:** Each year in the late Fall (around Giving Tuesday, before end-of-year) and again in the Spring (around the start of Q4) we will ask singers and supporters to contribute to fundraising campaigns. These fundraising campaigns help us reach revenue targets and keep our budget balanced.
 - **Individual Gifts:** We welcome individual gifts any time of year! Whether you chose to drop a few dollar bills in a donation basket, mail a check to the office, or contribute through one of our online fundraising campaigns, we couldn't do all that we do without your support. THANK YOU!
- **SUSTAINING MEMBER:** Be Awesome - Join OISM! *Oakland Interfaith Sustaining Members* make a monthly gift that helps us stay strong throughout the year. Any size gift adds up, so if you think you can afford even a \$5/mo. gift, sign up today at: <https://www.oigc.org/oism>
- **DONATE YOUR CAR:** We've partnered with [Cars2Charities](#) so that you can donate the value of your car to OIGC in 3 easy steps!
- **EMPLOYER MATCH:** Do you work for a large company? If so, do you know whether your employer might match your individual donations? Find out at: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=1799>
- **PROMOTE:** Do you or your employer do team building, executive education, or DEI/cultural competency training? OIGC is uniquely suited to bringing joy and unity to all people – including in the workplace. Our program *OIGC at the Office* brings the beauty of our art, and the leadership lessons of choral singing to offices around the Bay Area. www.oigc.org/attheoffice
- **LEGACY GIVING:** If your life has been enhanced by OIGC, consider remembering us in your living will or other estate documents.
- **HIRE OIGC & ENSEMBLES:** OIGC choirs and ensembles are available to perform at weddings, celebrations of life, corporate events, community engagements, and much more. Visit www.oigc.org/booking for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to their voices in song, OIGC has had many choir members offer additional talents and skills throughout the years. These talents are just as diverse as our membership itself, a beautiful expression of the way “Unity Through Diversity” works through us and for us. As a nonprofit organization, volunteerism is vital to our sustainability, and we look to choir members to continue volunteering their time and talents. Our membership agreement includes a section that briefly outlines service expectations that contribute to the health and viability of the choir (fundraising, public relations, serving on committees, and Board of Directors).

In the spirit of community, it is extremely important that we all consider taking our turns at the various positions of responsibility that are essential to the continued success of the choir and our mission. There

will be times in our lives when simply “showing up and singing” will be all we are capable of, but please continue looking for opportunities to help when you can. Here are some ways to get involved:

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT: Our office frequently welcomes assistance with everything from organizing supplies, to cataloging historical materials, to mailing thank you letters, to preparing for events. Talk to our **Operations Manager** for more info!

REHEARSAL: With rehearsal-related activities across eight groups, we welcome support at rehearsals in the form of registration, open/close procedures, administrative section support (i.e. recording parts at practice, and uploading to Chorus Connection) and more. Talk to your **Section Leader** for more info!

PRODUCTION: With more than 100 performance-related activities planned this fiscal year, volunteers will play a crucial role in our production success. From ticket sales to singer check-ins, to pre-production prep, to schlepping supplies and post-event clean-up, it takes a village to produce our shows, and we welcome your help! Talk to our **Production Manager** for more info!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Our board leadership is the backbone of our good governance and stability. We solicit for new board members at least annually. If you are interested in joining, contact the **Board President** for more information.

JOIN A COMMITTEE: OIGC is building out a strong slate of committees, subcommittees, task forces (TF), and ad hoc groups to support us in reaching our strategic goals. The following is a summary list of committees in action or development as of Summer 2022. Please see Appendix A for additional details of our volunteer program or contact our Operations Manager. Visit www.oigc.org for more information on Volunteering!

Committee

Subcommittee

Governance

Board Self-Assessment
Nominating
Strategic Planning TF
Policies & Procedures TF

Marketing

Institutional
Event Specific
Content Creation

Finance

Audit

Development

Corporate, incl. OIGC at the Office
Individual, incl. OISM
Appreciation, incl. SunsetSips

Leadership Teams (per choir)

Ministerial
Social
Alumni

Youth / Guardians

Events & Production

7. CHOIR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

OIGC is an umbrella organization for eight different choirs and ensembles! The following details outline distinctions of each performing group.

OAKLAND INTERFAITH GOSPEL CHOIR (OIGC)

Established 1986

Description

The choir that started it all, and for which this organization is named, the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir was founded in 1986 from a gospel music workshop led by Terrance Kelly at Living Jazz's Jazz Camp West. OIGC is an audition-only, semi-professional Black gospel music choir that performs 25-30 times per year. It includes the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Ensemble made up of 9 to 15 singers tasked with performing an additional 10-20 times per year. The most intensive of the choirs, OIGC has an active roster of 70+ members and rehearses weekly on Mondays year-round.

Rehearsals Mondays, 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Dues \$275 per season (\$25 / month for 11 months)

Uniforms

General Concert Attire: OIGC Robes – Under robe garments should be all with black socks/hosiery and dress shoes (no athletic shoes).

Formal Concert Attire: Black shift dress with teal sparkle jacket **–OR–** Black suit with teal bowtie. Black socks/hosiery and black dress shoes (no athletic shoes).

Casual Concert Attire: OIGC Uniform T-Shirt with black pants, sock/hosiery, and shoes. T-shirt need not be tucked in, but should be clean/ironed. Pants should not have holes, rips, or tears.

Accessories/Earrings: Diamond studs or simple gold hoops no larger than 2 inches in diameter. Additional accessories (rings, bangles, hair clips etc.) should be minimal.

Attendance Requirements

- Rehearsals are every Monday from 7pm to 10pm unless otherwise announced. If you arrive after 7:15pm you are considered tardy. Three (3) tardies will count as 1 absence.
- Performances scheduled 6 weeks in advance are mandatory. You must respond to all **RSVP** notification for performances in a time manner. If your response is “No” to a RSVP, please state in the comment area the reason for your absence.
- **Absence Notification Form** should be submitted no later than one week before missed rehearsal or performance. The day of rehearsal or performance.
- If an issue arises on the day of a rehearsal/performance where you will be late or unable to attend, please contact your Administrative Section Leader directly.
- You are allowed to miss up to 3 rehearsals + 1 performance per quarter without penalty.
- An **Extended Leave** is when you will be absent for a long period of time and will not be available to participate in any rehearsals, performances, and/or activities. You will be allowed one extended leave per season. The Artistic Director reserves the right to refuse any leave request.
- If you do not meet the attendance requirements for any given quarter, you may be placed on **Warning Status**. This means that your activity is being monitored and continued attendance issues may result in action. If you do not meet attendance requirements for two consecutive quarters, you may be placed on **Performance Probation** and may be unable to perform for three months. You are required to meet all membership commitments during the performance probation quarter as well as in the following quarter or your membership may be terminated.

OAKLAND INTERFAITH YOUTH CHOIR (OIYC)

Established 1997

Description

The Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir introduces Black gospel music to youth ages 12 to 17. The choir, first started in 1997, now includes over two dozen members from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. OIYC mentors local youth and provides support for academic success and admission to college. OIYC offers opportunities for touring and recording, application opportunity for the Riley West College Scholarship, community service credits, professional and life skills experience, developing performance skills, and the opportunity to performing in exciting spaces. Auditions take place before rehearsals on a rolling basis throughout the year.

Rehearsals August – May Saturdays, 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Dues \$450/year. (\$10 per rehearsal)

Uniforms

- Concert Attire:** Solid black dress shirt, black slacks or long skirt with black socks/hosiery and black dress shoes. Teal scarf or bowtie will be provided.
- Casual Attire:** Assigned T-Shirt with black pants, sock/hosiery, and shoes. T-shirt need not be tucked in, but should be clean/ironed. Pants should not have holes, rips, or tears.
- Accessories/Earrings:** Diamond studs or simple gold hoops no larger than 2 inches in diameter. Additional accessories (rings, bangles, hair clips etc.) should be minimal.

Attendance Requirements

Please make every attempt to commit yourself to be present for every rehearsal. Performances scheduled 6 weeks in advance are mandatory. All absences must be communicated to the Choir Coordinator.

OAKLAND INTERFAITH COMMUNITY CHOIR (OICC)

Established 2013

Description

Founded in September of 2013, the Oakland Interfaith Community Choir was created to fill a need in the community for a low-commitment, high-energy group that follows the same mission as its parent choir. Boasting as many as 150+ members, OICC is a non-auditioned choir that rehearses approximately once per month and performs 3-5 times each year.

Rehearsals 3rd Saturdays, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Session 1: August - December

Session 2: February – June

Dues \$150 per Session (\$30 / month)

Uniforms

- Concert Attire:** Solid black dress shirt/blouse, black slacks or long skirt with teal stole or bowtie. Black socks/hosiery and black dress shoes (no athletic shoes).
- Casual Concert Attire:** Assigned T-Shirt with black pants, sock/hosiery, and shoes. T-shirt need not be tucked in, but should be clean/ironed. Pants should not have holes, rips, or tears.
- Accessories/Earrings:** Diamond studs or simple gold hoops no larger than 2 inches in diameter. Additional accessories (rings, bangles, hair clips etc.) should be minimal.

Attendance Requirements

Please make every attempt to commit yourself to be present for every rehearsal. Singers are allowed to miss 2 rehearsals over the course of the season, with the last three rehearsals before a performance being mandatory.

OAKLAND INTERFAITH WORLD CHOIR (OIWC)

Established 2021

Description

In the Spring of 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, nine countries joined OIGC in five different languages for the inaugural World Choir Project, through virtual rehearsals and a video performance of [*I Won't Stop Singing My Praise*](#), an original song by Terrance Kelly to remind everyone that no matter what, we won't stop singing! Participants learn the song through virtual workshops with Terrance Kelly and get tips for recording and sending in a video to sing with the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir from wherever they are!

Rehearsals

As determined by the project.

Dues

\$30 per project.

Uniform & Attendance

As determined by the project.

OAKLAND INTERFAITH KIDS CHOIR (OIKC)

Established 2022

Description

The Oakland Interfaith Kids Choir introduces elementary and gospel music concepts to children ages 5 to 11 through rhythm games, singing, and movement. OIKC was created with community and accessibility in mind. We know for some that have an interest in Community Choir, finding childcare can be a challenge. Rehearsing in conjunction with the Community Choir, OIKC provides a space for you and the child in your life to have a parallel activity can be a great way to each enjoy an activity with your peers, while building something in common.

Rehearsals 3rd Saturdays, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Session 1: August – December

Session 2: February – June

Dues \$50/Session. (\$10 per rehearsal)

Uniforms

Concert Attire: Solid white dress shirt, black slacks or skirt, with black socks/hosiery and dress shoes (no athletic shoes). Stoles will be provided.

Casual Attire: Assigned T-Shirt with black pants, sock/hosiery, and shoes. T-Shirt need not be tucked in but should be clean and ironed. Pants should not have holes, rips, or tears.

Attendance Requirements

Please make every attempt to commit yourself to be present for every rehearsal. Performances scheduled 6 weeks in advance are mandatory. All absences must be communicated to the Choir Coordinator. The Artistic Director has the right to request or deny a singer to a particular performance.

OAKLAND YOUTH CHORUS (OYC)

The Oakland Youth Chorus (OYC), established in 1974, celebrates diverse communities through song. With the goal to build and foster multicultural understanding and respect, OYC brings together East Bay children and youth ages 7–17 from different neighborhoods and cultural backgrounds.

The Oakland Youth Chorus provides Bay Area students with comprehensive music education. Combining repertoire from cultures around the world, performance opportunities, and a concrete foundation in music literacy, singers support their communities with performances for local schools, organizations, and cultural events each season.

Attendance Requirements

Participants are expected to attend every rehearsal. Participation may be discontinued at the discretion of the Artistic Director after three (3) unexcused absences from rehearsals. OYC participants may be allowed up to three (3) instances of being tardy by no more than five minutes before a make-up rehearsal will be required. The Artistic Director has final authority to invite or disinvite a participant from any rehearsal or performance. Repeated late pick-ups from rehearsal may result in your child being excused from the program.

After three missed rehearsals, the singer forfeits all fees and will be released from the group. They can request to return in the new session. Singers/guardians will be notified of a need to attend a make-up rehearsal one week before the scheduled rehearsal.

Uniforms

Uniforms may be purchased at the end of September and the beginning of January via Chorus Connection.

Concert Attire:	Purple uniform dress shirt and black uniform pants, cleaned/ironed and hemmed/fitted. Black socks/hosiery and dress shoes (no athletic shoes).
Casual Attire:	Assigned T-Shirt with black pants, sock/hosiery, and shoes. T-Shirt need not be tucked in but should be clean and ironed. Pants should not have holes, rips, or tears.
Hair/Accessories:	Hair well-kept, swept out of face. Additional accessories (rings, bangles, hair clips etc.) should be minimal.

Chamber Singers (CS)

Established 1974

Description

OYC-CS is a group of advanced singers entering 8th-12th grades. An audition is required for the Chamber Singers. Chamber Singers focus on advanced singing techniques, singing with confidence from different genres of classical, jazz, 20th century, spiritual, pop, and world music. These singers will sing in three-part, four-part and five-part harmony, learn stage presence and performance skills. Chamber Singers perform in all OYC concerts (December and May), as a stand-alone ensemble and with Concert Chorus in numerous public and community performances throughout the year.

Rehearsals Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30 pm – 7:00pm

Session 1: August - December

Session 2: January - May

Dues \$300/Session. (\$10 per rehearsal)

Concert Chorus (CC) aka “Middle School Magic”

Established 1998

Description

OYC-CC is for singers entering the 5th through 9th grades. A placement audition is required for Concert Chorus. Select 4th graders may be included in the ensemble at the Director’s discretion. Concert Chorus members work on building a solid foundation in Music Theory, rhythm and sight reading through a Kodály based curriculum. Concert Chorus members gain confidence singing music in two-part, three-part, four-part and five-part harmony in different languages. Singers acquire vocal skills including the correct use of the head voice, breath support, vowel formation, and consonant placement. Concert Chorus performs in all OYC concerts (December and May) and annual tours. In addition, the Concert Chorus will perform at outside gigs and events throughout the year.

Rehearsals Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30pm - 5:45 pm

Session 1: August - December

Session 2: January - May

Dues \$300/Session. (\$10 per rehearsal)

Miracles (MS) A.K.A Elementary Singers

Established 2003

Description

OYC-ES is for grades K-5 and builds upon the participant’s musical foundation by developing vocal and harmonic skills, performance practice, and learning and performing various music from diverse world cultures. Students perform for community events and learn more complex works, including partner songs and 2-part pieces.

Rehearsals

Mondays, 4:45 pm – 5:45 pm

Session 1: August - December

Session 2: January - May

Dues

\$150/Session. (\$10 per rehearsal)

8. GLOSSARY

Alumni	Someone who was previously a singer of any of our ensembles
Choralator	Choir Coordinator (whether a volunteer or staff position)
Dues Subsidies	OIGC believes no one should be turned away for lack of funds, and so we offer a program to support a dues waiver or subsidy. Sometimes colloquially referred to as a dues scholarship.
Newbie	Singers who have just joined and are still getting to know our community
OICC	Oakland Interfaith Community Choir
OIGC	Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, referring to the organization as a whole, and/or to the audition-only, semi-professional, namesake, Black gospel choir
OIKC	Oakland Interfaith Kids Choir
OIWC	Oakland Interfaith World Choir
OIYC	Oakland Interfaith Youth Choir
OYC	Oakland Youth Chorus, referring to the legacy group of ensembles acquired in 2022
OYC-CC	Oakland Youth Chorus - Concert Chorus (6 th -8 th grade singers).
OYC-CS	Oakland Youth Chorus - Chamber Singers (9 th -12 th grade singers).
OYC-MS	Oakland Youth Chorus - Miracle Singers (K-5 th grade singers).
Ol'bie	Long-time choir members with lots of experience and institutional memory
Participant	Singer or community member who has completed registration for the current period
Participation Period "Session"	The portion of the Season or year each group is committed to, i.e. Aug-Jun for OIGC; Aug-Dec for OIKC
Scholarship	OIGC collaborates with the Riley West Scholarship program to provide college scholarships to OIYC High School Seniors applying for college
Statutory Member	Elected member of the board of directors, with voting rights
Section Leaders	Selected volunteer representatives of each musical part (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) who support choir activities such as attendance, or note-learning.
Thoughts, Prayers, Meditation	Our interfaith organization embraces the different ways that people connect with spirituality. This phrase is used to express that inclusivity.

9. REGISTRATION

Initial/Returning Singer Checklist:

- Register or Enroll online: ([OIGC](#), [OICC](#), [Youth](#))
- Activate Chorus Connection account
- Complete/update profile information on Chorus Connection
- Pay dues/tuition via Chorus Connection
- Sign and return Participant Agreement located at: www.oigc.org/governance

Continuing Singer Checklist:

- Update profile information on Chorus Connection
- Pay dues/tuition via Chorus Connection
- Sign and return Participant Agreement located at: www.oigc.org/governance

10. HANDBOOK UPDATES LOG

August 2023 updates:

- Updates on COVID-19 & Health Related Safety Requirements
- Tuition updates on Youth Ensembles
- Updated Ensembles overview to reflect tuition
- Attendance updates to all Ensembles
- Uniform update to OIKC
- Deleted duplicate uniform information for OYC Ensembles
- Specified years of OIGC Five-Year Strategic Priorities (2022-2027)
- Updated Registration Section to reflect current practices
- Updated pages and paragraph formatting