

Threshold Singers of Cincinnati Membership Guide

Leadership Team

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The Mission of Threshold Choir International (TCI):

*Singing for those at the thresholds
of life.*

The Vision

*A world where all at life's thresholds
may be honored with compassion
shared through song.*



The Threshold Choir movement was established in 2000 and has grown into a thriving international organization. We are a bouquet of beautiful singers in many communities who dedicate their voices and hearts to bring kindness and comfort at the important thresholds of life. Our work is “kindness made audible.”

Threshold singing requires a certain level and style of vocal skill. Following are the requirements for someone who wants to join Threshold Singers of Cincinnati:

1. Be able to carry a tune.
2. Be able to hold your own part (or sincerely want to learn) while others sing harmony.
3. Be able to sing softly and blend your voice with others (or sincerely want to learn).
4. Be able to communicate kindness with your voice.
5. Be willing to use self-monitoring and accept peer feedback.
6. Be willing to cultivate your comfort level for being with those who are dying, grieving, or in deep transition.
7. Be aligned with TCI's mission that those who have been historically underrepresented - based on race, ethnicity, age, physical/cognitive ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, size, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion - have access to both receiving our services and offering them. [see TCI's full DEI statement on the last page.]

Steps to Membership with Threshold Singers of Cincinnati [TSC]

STEP 1: Join

1. Contact Mary Manera to schedule a brief meeting to sing together. You will be provided the music & practice track for one Threshold song to practice before the meeting. You may be encouraged to seek basic vocal coaching before moving on to the next steps.
2. Come to at least three TSC meetings – these can be either New Member Orientations or regular rehearsals. You will be connected with an experienced bedside singer “buddy” who will be available to support you through your preparation process.
3. Join Threshold Choir International. Visit <https://thresholdchoir.org/membership-interest/> and complete the sign-up process. You will be asked to make an affordable, generous, personally meaningful donation to TCI, and to electronically sign the “Bedside Singing Policy / Membership Agreement” (a copy is provided within this packet).

STEP 2: Prepare

All the following items must be completed before you can become a Bedside Singer. Your preparation can take 6-12 months to complete.

1. Regularly attend 1st and 3rd Wednesday rehearsals.
2. Sit with your buddy at rehearsals to receive support during your preparation.
3. Attend the New Member orientation meetings, which will include working through the TCI Bedside Curriculum on the TCI website.
4. Shadow or witness bedside singing at least three times. You may sing the melody along with the other singers if you are confident with the song; otherwise, quietly observe.
5. Learn by heart the melody of all the Core Songs in our repertoire, which will require practice on your own between rehearsals. You will receive a Core Song Packet. You can also access practice tracks & sheet music in your TCI member account online.
6. Embrace and complete any additional preparation that is requested of you, such as vocal coaching, death & dying education, etc.

Once you have completed all the preparation steps, you will discuss your readiness to sing at a bedside with the Leadership Team. Together you will discern when you are ready for graduation as a full bedside singer.

STEP 3: Graduate

You will select an experienced choir member to partner with you for your graduation. During a regular rehearsal, you and your partner will sing two core songs to someone in the chair. You will then sit in the chair to receive a song. Share what Threshold singing means to you, and how it felt to be sung to. Once you have completed the ceremony, you are authorized to sing at the bedside.

STEP 4: Sing

There are several ways to participate as a Threshold Singer. *To participate in any activity for TSC, your membership with TCI must be current. It is your responsibility to respond to the annual membership reminder you will receive, and to make an annual donation to TCI, to keep your membership with TSC active.*

Bedside Singing -- sing in groups of 2 or 3 graduated singers. Bedside singing can happen on an occasional basis when requests are received, or through participating on a facility-based team on a regular schedule. We ask that all active members be available for occasional bedside singing.

Memorial Services—active members who are in the preparation phase can participate.

Community Sings, Song Baths, and other community events -- active members who are in the preparation phase can participate.

Regional and All-Choir gatherings are open to all active members.

ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS

Commit to attend both practices on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Your presence & participation helps us build community and helps you to be well prepared to sing at the bedside. We understand that there are times when you cannot attend. Please be willing to make attendance a priority and notify us when you cannot attend. We do have seasonal members; those who are only in town for part of the year must stay current with the core songs & maintain TCI membership.

SINGING

Commit to strengthen your vocal and blending abilities. Memorize songs in our repertoire. Know them “in the cells” of your mind, heart and body.

DEATH AND DYING

Be willing to educate yourself about death, dying, and grief, to maintain a comfort level and a healing presence at the bedside.

COVID VACCINATIONS & PRECAUTIONS

Covid policy is set by TCI, and TSC is obligated to adhere to current TCI policy. As of March 2023, proof of current Covid vaccination is not required, but current vaccination is highly recommended. Because singing is a high-risk activity for spread of respiratory illnesses, wearing a N95 mask at bedside is recommended when Covid or other seasonal illnesses are high. Precaution policies & requirements are subject to change.

FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

Although is not required, you may choose to join one or more of our bedside “teams” who sing regularly at specific health care facilities. Some facilities require Threshold members to meet additional requirements. These could include volunteer training, background checks, masking, health screenings, or annual proof of vaccinations.

COMPUTER ACCESS

Check regularly for email or text reminders, as well as time-sensitive requests to sing at bedside.

COMFORT WITH DIVERSITY

Our members come from a variety of religious, cultural, and other life experiences, as well as diverse sexual orientation.

COSTS

You will be asked to make an annual contribution to Threshold Choir International to maintain your membership status. While the *suggested* annual contribution for membership is \$84, you can contribute any annual amount to maintain your active membership. At your discretion, you may also support our local chapter by making monetary and/or material contributions.

TCI Bedside Singing Policy / Membership Agreement

Updated: January 2023

**New members will be prompted to electronically sign the following statement when you first join TCI and each time you renew your TCI membership.*

The Threshold Choir is a volunteer network of a cappella singers who gently sing for and with those at the thresholds of life in communities around the world.

Members of the organization are eligible for the following:

- Bedside Singer training
- Connection to a vibrant community of singers
- Permission to represent Threshold Choir
- Liability insurance coverage for Bedside Singers
- Participation in Threshold Choir community events
- Attendance at Threshold Choir national and regional gatherings
- Access to the Threshold Choir website including:
 - Threshold Choir repertoire & sound files
 - Members only page with calendars of events
 - Education for directors and singers
 - Monthly newsletter

Members of the Threshold Choir present a kind and compassionate presence to those for whom we sing as well as toward one another. We commit to practicing compassionate communication, to listening for what is true in every communication and to speaking with clarity and kindness.

When invited to the bedside, we offer only our gift of song. In this capacity, we do not initiate touch, but honor and comply with protocols in the medical environment, which restricts touching to those who are licensed to do so. We refrain from assisting patients and seek assistance of a facility provider or personal caregiver when needs such as repositioning, eating or drinking arise.

Membership Agreement

1. I agree to maintain member status in the Threshold Choir organization, adherence to organizational policies and participation/affiliation with a local chapter.
2. I agree to not initiate touch or assist patients with caregiver responsibilities at the bedside.
3. I agree to honor regulations regarding privacy of patients, as detailed in HIPAA.* (Copy attached.)
4. I agree to honor and respect the diversity of members, patients, caregivers and healthcare providers regardless of their political and religious beliefs.
5. I agree to respect the use of the Threshold Choir repertoire and specifications of individual songwriters for use of their music. The repertoire is only to be used in alignment with the Threshold Choir mission.
6. I agree to honor all policies set forth by the Threshold Choir organization. These policies may be updated and expanded from time to time.
7. I agree to demonstrate a respectful demeanor when representing Threshold Choir and to communicate with kindness and compassion toward all members of our Threshold Choir community and the people we serve.

Threshold Choir's Commitment to Cultural Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Approved by TCI Board of Directors 3/17/2021

Threshold Choir celebrates and affirms the beauty, dignity, and wholeness of all people and believes that everyone deserves to be treated with kindness from their first to their last breath.

To support singing as kindness for all, Threshold Choir commits to creating authentic connections with diverse communities doing end-of-life work in order to contribute to and empower a just, inclusive, and equitable world.

Cultural diversity, equity and inclusion in Threshold Choir embodies the values, policies and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race, ethnicity, age, physical/cognitive ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, size, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—have access to both receiving our services and offering them.

Threshold Choir is committed to cultural diversity, equity and inclusion. Accordingly, we invite and encourage chapters to:

1. engage in the substantive learning required to become culturally conscious in their understanding and action;
2. acknowledge and dismantle within the organization the characteristics that contribute to the culture of white supremacy;
3. allocate time and resources to reach out and engage with a diversity of communities and cultures offering end-of-life care;
4. develop songs that bring cultural inclusivity into our repertoire.

We recognize that we are not experts in issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We seek to listen, learn, and contribute from within our areas of strength and wisdom by:

- building open-hearted communities of service
- creating safer and braver spaces where we bring our whole selves
- honoring sacred spaces
- creating songs that embody caring and solace
- singing as kindness
- treating the songs, the singers, and those we sing to with love, honor, and respect.