

# Benchmarking Survey Summary

Board of Directors Structure Work  
Group

**Draft**



# Benchmarked Non-Profits

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Raleigh Ringers

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Camp Rehoboth Chorus

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Clear Space Theatre

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Southern Delaware Chorale

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Frederick Chorale

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Possum Point Players



Half of benchmarked groups are similar in size to CRI and half are much larger

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Non-Profit	Lifespan in years	Annual Operating Budget \$	Annual Performances
Raleigh Ringers	30	275,000	25
Camp Rehoboth Chorus	11	55,000	9
Clear Space Theatre	16	1,000,000	50
Southern Delaware Chorale	31	45,000	3
Frederick Chorale	43	50,000	4
Possum Point Players	47	200,000	30
Capital Ringers	16	40,000	15

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# Organizational Questions



During the last decade there has been a trend toward adding financial development positions



Clear Space - hired development director



Frederick Chorale - added financial development position to board of directors

Succession  
planning is  
weak in  
benchmarked  
organizations


In general not  
done

Some by-laws  
provisions on  
who becomes  
acting president  
in case of a  
vacancy

Staggered  
board terms is a  
best practice

Cross training  
among paid  
staff

Workload distribution is achieved by encouraging members to work on committees

- Members are either required to participate on at least one committee or are strongly encouraged to participate
  - Raleigh Ringers - just accepts the 80/20 rule of who does the work
  - Trend toward adding paid admin positions/office help
  - Committee structure is key to workload balance
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Only large organizations successful in involving community leaders. Groups our size don't do it or else rely on grant foundations for input



Raleigh Ringers - use outside board members



Clear Space - visits offices to get to know town council members and Chamber of Commerce members



Southern Delaware Chorale - half-hearted attempt to form an Advisory Council; didn't go anyplace



Frederick Chorale - uses input from grant foundations



Possum Point Players - used an Advisory Council in the past; limited success



Other than  
musicians,  
most common  
outsourced  
services are  
bookkeeping  
and social  
media  
design

Most used outsourced services are bookkeeping and social media/publicity design

Most groups use paid musicians to supplement performances

Legal advice is typically supplied by a member/lawyer

Raleigh Ringers use technical services for producing CD's and DVD's for sale

# Operating Policy Questions



Contingency  
planning is  
weak in  
benchmarked  
organizations




Raleigh Ringers - extra ringers, everyone sits out some songs




Theatre groups use understudies and rotate performance nights




To reach diverse audiences  
Capital Ringers  
should consider  
a concert of  
ethnic music

- Raleigh Ringers - mini tours to neighboring states. Only reuse a venue every 3 years. Use Google to find venues with artist series, send information to likely candidates.
  - Southern Delaware Chorale - does a concert of African-American music each year
  - Possum Point Players - puts on all African-American shows
  - Surveyed groups have had less success in reaching out to the local Hispanic community
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The Benchmarked organizations have no specific policies to capitalize on population growth. However, the Frederick Chorale had an unrelated comment that may be of value

- Frederick Chorale - for 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary gave two free concerts (asked for donations during concert). To their surprise they doubled their audience size and still maintained historical income levels. Now they do this every year and search out venues with larger seating capacity.
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Benchmarked organizations try to avoid performing on same dates as similar groups

- Benchmarked groups try to identify other concerts of similar organizations and avoid those dates
- Frederick Chorale has targeted certain audiences (e.g. pairing up with Frederick Children's Chorus) to make them eligible for targeted foundation grants



To engage members the benchmarked organizations use strong onboarding and frequent communications


- Benchmarked organizations try to have a quality onboarding process. Techniques include:
  - Assigned mentors
  - Section leaders
- Organizations also attempt to communicate frequently in email. For example, the Frederick Chorale has a weekly newsletter which goes out to all members

Benchmarked groups advertise to recruit new members, have strong onboarding and reach out to area youth

- Advertise where new retirees, looking for activities in their new community, can see call for try-outs.
- **Suggestion:** CRI should consider a summer youth camp with a youth concert at the end. Parents will come to see their youth play bells and this may yield new youth or parent members.



To utilize all  
media  
benchmarked  
groups try to  
tap strong  
internal  
expertise

- Clear Space - focus on electronic media rather than print media
  - Frederick Chorale - has publicity chair that does this for a living and is good at it. Works with local tourism council to get flyers distributed.
  - Possum Point - email list for attendees is crucial. Need to get email addresses and communicate on a regular basis
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# Financial Questions



Benchmarked groups have done much better with foundation grants than corporate sponsorship

- Benchmarked organizations have been very successful in getting grants
- Benchmarked organizations have had **virtually no success** in getting corporate sponsors
- Benchmarked organizations have added a position for financial development



Benchmarked groups have strong financial reserves but no policy for calculating a required reserve amount.

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Raleigh Ringers just budget repairs based on historical trends

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Clear Space has successfully used Go Fund Me campaigns to fund certain costs

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Southern Delaware Chorale tries to be very frugal

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Frederick Chorale has a policy of not spending reserve unless necessary

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Possum Point Players are not above begging for special needs money

To control  
spending  
benchmarked  
groups produce  
a budget for  
major  
performances


- Raleigh Ringers charges venues a set fee for all concerts to give venue incentive to sell tickets and advertise
- Clear Space sets detailed production budget and holds Artistic Director accountable
- Frederick Chorale requires Artistic Director to submit a budget which includes cost of instrumentalists
- Possum Point Players maintains sample budgets from past shows

For financial  
transparency  
and  
accountability  
benchmarked  
groups review  
financial data  
at every  
board  
meeting

Raleigh Ringers – president must approve every expenditure of \$100+

Clear Space puts finance report in Google Docs which is visible to all members

All groups have a finance committee which handles budgeting, audit, financial review (but not fundraising)



# Several groups do levy annual member dues

Raleigh Ringers does not

Clear Space - Board members have financial targets for ticket sales

Camp Rehoboth charges \$60 per year to cover music costs

Southern Delaware Chorale charges \$60/semester or \$100 per year

Frederick Chorale used to charge \$200 per year. Switched this to member donations which helps get grant money and matching funds



Benchmarked  
groups all  
have  
published  
donor levels

- Frederick Chorale eliminated perks on donor levels and just went with publishing names in program. They believe perks are a distraction and don't generate additional donations
- Raleigh Ringer levels are Maestro \$5000+, Concert Master \$2500-\$4999, Directors Circle \$1000-\$2499, Benefactor \$500-\$999, Sustainer \$250-\$499, Patron \$100-\$249, Contributor \$25-\$99 (see their website)