

# ***TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACCESS PLAN***

## **Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir ADA Policy Statement**

The Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir welcomes participants (including singers, guest performers, musicians, Board and advisory committee members) and audience members with disabilities. The policy of the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir (the "TCC Choir") is to ensure equal opportunity for all people to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the TCC Choir, regardless of race, gender, national origin, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

## **Background of ADA Policy Statement and Implementation Plan**

The Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir designed and implemented its first ADA accessibility policy and plan in 1998, just after its incorporation as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation. That policy and plan were approved by the Board of Directors, following review and approval by VSA Arts Minnesota. The plan was updated in 2005.

The TCC Choir's advisory committee, consisting of members of the community choir and touring ensemble, addresses ongoing accessibility issues for TCC Choir members in reaching and attending performances and rehearsals. The TCC Choir is committed to ensuring that its own members with motor disabilities or difficulty standing for lengths of time are accommodated. The TCC Choir has a wheelchair available for its members who need assistance reaching a performance site, and performance stools available in various heights for TCC Choir members who cannot stand for some or all of a performance. In addition, the TCC Choir's current office/rehearsal/storage space is fully accessible for TCC Choir members. At all TCC Choir-sponsored events, the TCC Choir ensures that ASL interpreters are engaged for performances and rehearsals, so that they can become familiar with the music and lyrics they will interpret.

During 2006, two audience surveys were conducted, asking questions about overall concert experience and soliciting, with open-ended questions, audience comments on aspects of their concert experience that were particularly good or that needed improvement. There were two suggestions for improvement, which the Choir is following up -- that the ASL interpreters add movement to their interpreting, in order to make the interpretation more meaningful, and that O'Shaughnessy Auditorium's physical accessibility be improved. The Choir's advisory committee will continue to follow up on these comments during 2007 and will continue to solicit suggestions for improvement.

The TCC Choir anticipates that its ADA plan and policy will be reviewed at least annually to update and assess their utility.

## Accessibility Implementation Plan Statements and 2007 Status

### *Policies and Management*

1. The TCC Choir will reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. Special arrangements will be made on an as-needed basis to ensure that this policy goal is met.
  - Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Music is taught by rote, in line with African-American gospel music tradition. This method, however, accommodates members with limited vision. The TCC Choir currently accommodates performers who require stools and wheelchairs at rehearsals and at self-sponsored performances. The Choir reviews access to performance venues prior to accepting invitations to performances and strives to accommodate all performers who require it.
  
2. The TCC Choir shall not discriminate on the basis of disability against individuals with disabilities that desire to become members of the TCC Choir, its Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, or any subcommittees of these groups.
  - Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance.
  
3. The TCC Choir will incorporate review of its ADA policy and implementation plan into its periodic strategic planning and will use its best efforts to ensure that ADA goals set forth in its strategic plan are met in a timely manner.
  - Status: Specific ADA goals are not currently included in the long-range strategic plan. They will be included in the next update of the long-range strategic plan (scheduled to be done in 2008).
  
4. The TCC Choir shall provide suggestion forms to any employee, board member, audience member or other individual who wishes to comment or provide feedback about accessibility issues. Concerns and feedback regarding accessibility issues can also be communicated to the TCC Choir through e-mail and in person, and reasonable accommodation, including, e.g. a sign language interpreter or a physically accessible meeting space, shall be provided to any individual who wishes to convey suggestions to the TCC Choir. Accessibility suggestions shall be considered promptly, and a response shall be provided to the individual making the suggestion or complaint, in writing or alternative format requested by that individual, within 30 days of the date of submission of the suggestion or concern. The TCC Choir may consult with others, including, for example, Minnesota State Arts Board or VSA Arts Minnesota, regarding an appropriate response.
  - Status: Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance. The TCC Choir's ADA policy is posted on its website, and audience feedback is solicited at concerts periodically. The advisory committee members are identified, and Choir members are encouraged to approach them with any concerns, including accessibility concerns, they have.

5. The TCC Choir shall post its ADA policy and accompanying implementation plan on its website and information regarding accessibility accommodations in programs, newsletters and other communications with the public.
  - Status: The ADA policy and plan are posted on the Choir's website. Information regarding accessibility accommodations will be provided in programs, newsletters and the like beginning in 2007.
6. The TCC Choir shall compile and maintain a file of accessibility resources to enable timely compliance with accessibility-related requests.
  - Status: Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance.
7. The TCC Choir shall review this implementation plan at least annually and shall revise it as deemed necessary by the organization to better meet its overall ADA policy.
  - Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance.

### ***Programs and Activities***

1. A copy of the TCC Choir's ADA policy and implementation plan will be distributed to all performers and musicians annually in their membership packets. It will also be available to interested individuals in the TCC Choir office.
  - Status: The ADA policy and implementation plan have been distributed to the current members of the Choir and is available in the office.
2. Upon request, with 14 days' notice, any of TCC Choir's written information will be made available in alternative formats including Braille, large print and audio tape. A sign language interpreter shall be available to interpret all self-sponsored performances, upon request.
  - Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance.
3. The TCC Choir will review its Website to identify compliance issues there affecting visitors who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, or manually impaired, and for mobile users.
  - This goal was not met in 2006. Beginning in 2007, the TCC Choir will work with its Webmaster to assess costs and actions that would improve the Website to make it more accessible.
4. The TCC Choir shall be cognizant of the need for some performers and musicians to share rides or take public transportation to rehearsals and events, and shall strive to hold rehearsals and performances at times and in venues that are accessible by safe public transportation. For performances outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the TCC Choir will strive to provide accessible transportation for performers.

- Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance.

5. The TCC Choir shall provide stools for performers that are unable to stand for extended periods of time during performances. Members of the Choir who require additional reasonable accommodations to perform with the Choir shall be accommodated.

- Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance. The Choir investigated acquisition of a mobile scooter in 2006, but was unable to afford it. A wheelchair is currently available, however, and is used by performers currently.

6. The TCC Choir shall have a first-aid emergency kit available at self-sponsored performances and all rehearsals.

- The TCC Choir has obtained a first-aid kit.

### ***Facilities***

1. The TCC Choir will ensure that its rehearsals and all self-sponsored performances are physically accessible to all individuals who desire to attend. Physical accessibility shall include parking, entrance areas, seating area and restroom areas.

- Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance.

2. The TCC Choir shall raise the issue of accessibility in discussions with promoters or hosts who contract with the TCC Choir to perform. The TCC Choir will use its best efforts to ensure that all its performances in spaces not controlled by the TCC Choir shall be physically accessible to all who desire to attend.

- Status: This is an ongoing goal that should be reviewed annually. Currently, the TCC Choir is in compliance. The Choir has not formalized its communication with prospective performance venues, asking specifically what accessibility accommodations exist there; however, the issue of accessibility is discussed during booking arrangements.