

OPERA TEENS

Starting and Running Your Regional Council

MISSION STATEMENT: THE PURPOSE OF YOUR COUNCIL

Why do you exist? No, we don't mean as a person. That's a much larger question that you can grapple with for the rest of your life. What we mean is why does your Opera Teens Regional Council exist? Or, to put it in corporate American terms, what is your mission? A short, well-written mission statement can help you quickly and easily explain your Council to potential members and supporters, as well as keep your Council focused.

How to write a good mission statement:

1. Keep it short. Think one to two sentences.
2. Use verbs. Don't just describe who you are — be sure that it's clear what you are doing.
3. Take a look at this example. You may adapt it or adopt it if you wish!

The mission of the ABC Regional Council is to learn together about opera, raise awareness of the art form, and give back to our communities.

SCHEDULING: WHEN AND WHERE TO MEET

When should you meet?

To be an official Regional Council, we ask that you plan at least three events between the months of September and August. OPERA America offers national events that you can plan your events around or get involved in.

Where should you meet?

There are several potential places where you might be able to meet. Consider these possibilities:

- **School:** Talk to a teacher to see if you can be an official school club. You will likely need a teacher to sponsor you. The potential benefit is that schools often have comfortable space and resources (such as internet access) that can make meetings easier. The downside is that it might be harder to include members outside of your school.
- **Your Local Opera House:** Some opera companies might be interested in hosting an Opera Teens Regional Council meeting. OPERA America can help you connect with your local company.
- **A Public Library or Park:** Public spaces are nice because everyone can access them. If you try for a library, be sure to talk with the librarians first to see if there is a space you can use without disturbing others.

- Homes: In some cases, it might make sense for members to host meetings at their own homes. Just be sure to get permission first.

Be respectful of your environment! Get permission. And be sure your parent or guardian knows where you are.

GROWING YOUR GROUP: HOW TO GET MORE MEMBERS INVOLVED

Regional Council Facebook Group

Create a Council page or public group on Facebook. Follow these guidelines so that your Council can be listed on the Opera Teens webpage:

1. Include your mission statement in the "About" section.
2. Make sure that photos are appropriate. No rude gestures, nudity, or disrespectful symbols, please. (We know you wouldn't do that!)
3. Once you've created your page, send us the link to review.
4. Add some content before inviting more friends.
 - Links to interesting opera-related YouTube videos
 - Pictures from great productions and articles about favorite singers.
 - When you share a link, ask a question or share an opinion that might get a discussion going.
 - Encourage your fellow members to contribute.
 - Once you have content up, invite your friends to like your page or join your group.

Plan an Event

Sometimes it's easiest to get more members if you plan an event first. You can invite people through Facebook, Twitter or even the old-fashioned way — word of mouth. You might see if a teacher will let you make an announcement or hang a poster.

Be inclusive! Opera has something to offer people of all backgrounds and people with different interests. It's not just for serious music or drama students. People with interests in architecture or fashion, for instance, might be interested in design aspects. People who like poetry and literature might be interested in seeing familiar stories set to music. Try to recruit a diverse group in terms of age, gender and ethnic backgrounds. Diversity makes for interesting discussion!