



Video Transcript
Joan Boutilier, International President – January 2021

Each of us has our own story about what Sweet Adelines means to us. The main reason I'm a member of Sweet Adelines is because of the many rich opportunities it has offered me. I often think back to my first chorus visit and hearing the sound of the chorus. The sound of the four-part harmony and the prospect of meeting other singers were an instant appeal to me — even though I knew dues would be a factor in deciding whether or not I could become a member.

Over the years there were times when finances were strained, there were job changes to survive and college educations to fund. My Sweet Adelines experience kept me going during unexpected losses and difficult life disappointments, but it has also enriched and set the stage for unexpected and rare celebrations. Through it all, Sweet Adelines has been a steady presence and allowed me to grow at home and in life.

2020 was a difficult year for everyone and many of those challenges look to continue in 2021. Many of us are facing the challenges of illness, loss of income, loss of loved ones, isolation, and the loss of singing in person with friends we cherish. This has led some members to request that we lower International dues. The International Board of Directors (IBOD) discussed the requests at our October meeting and after a detailed financial analysis, made the difficult decision to keep International dues at \$100 USD a year.

Although lowering International dues would be detrimental to the long term sustainability of Sweet Adelines International, the IBOD felt it was important to look for ways to provide financial relief where we could. A group of membership-related changes that will touch members at multiple levels of the organization have been approved. These changes include the following:

- A 120-day grace period will be granted for all membership renewals through December 2021.
- Prospective choruses are granted a one year extension to meet the requirements to advance in the chartering process.
- The minimum number of members required to renew the chapter charter will be waived for the 2021-22 fiscal year charter period.
- The charter renewal fee will be reduced by 50% for the 2021-22 fiscal year charter period.
- Quartet registration/renewals fees will be reduced by 50% from May 1, 2021 – July 31, 2021.
- Regions will be given a \$400 USD stipend for a virtual meeting platform.

Some of you may still be disappointed that dues are not being lowered but we hope that the approval of these six proposals will be seen as an act of good faith...that we are listening and constantly looking for ways to help while we navigate this pandemic in 2021.

In this year of revenue loss to Sweet Adelines International, member dues are critical to sustain the organization through the pandemic. To better understand the need for International dues, it is helpful to understand what you receive in return. In the attachment that accompanies this video is a list of Sweet Adelines benefits compiled by members.

This list was created based upon member feedback and perspective from interviews conducted as part of the Small-Medium Chorus Value Proposition Task Force mandate. This task force interviewed members representing various choruses to get their perspective on the reasons why chapters leave the organization, the benefits they receive, and what can be done to help. (To see the full mandate of the task force, visit the [task force webpage](#) on the Sweet Adelines website. This page requires a member login. Need helping logging in? See our [step-by-step login instructions](#).)

Also considered by the IBOD in making their decision is a breakdown of the organization's current financial situation. To see a summary of this analysis, please refer to the pie charts in the attachment which indicate revenue sources, (including dues), how and where money is spent, and the impact that COVID-19 had on our revenue and expenses in 2020.

One of the most notable effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sweet Adelines International has been the cancellation of our regional and international conventions as well as in-person educational events. Some of you have asked "If we are saving money by not holding in person events, shouldn't we be able to discount our dues?"

The Sweet Adelines International annual operating budget relies significantly on revenue from our international educational events such as the International Education Symposium, our International Convention, and membership dues. While it's true we didn't spend money to stage the events this year, we also lost our largest source of guaranteed revenue outside of member dues. Pre-COVID, 43% of our membership dues was used for operational expenses such as the membership database, website hosting, and so on. Without the convention revenue this year, we will now need to utilize 76% of our dues revenue from this year to handle operational expenses.

We also rely on the revenue from these events and member dues to fund year-round activities and essential aspects of running an international association, including funding the 27 full-time headquarters staff members who administer and run the business of Sweet Adelines for over 18,000 members!

Under the direction of our CEO, the headquarters staff has exercised due diligence and is running our business with care and compassion. Budgets are constantly being revised and belts are being tightened in all departments. The difficult decision to lay off a few staff members was made early in the pandemic, and there is currently a hiring freeze. The pandemic involved a lot of pivoting for staff, just like it did for choruses. The reduction in staff and hiring freeze means that the same amount of work, or in some cases additional work created by the pandemic environment, is being done by fewer people.

Staff has taken on added responsibilities to further support member volunteers, such as providing assistance with renegotiating contracts for regionals, keeping members engaged through collecting varied and easily accessible online education offerings, and thoughtful communication as the organization navigates this time together. A recent example of how staff and members have worked together during this time was the RMT networking sessions which took place in November, at which senior staff from Events, Membership, and Marketing were present and active.

Our recent virtual convention is another example of the staff's ingenuity, creativity, and talent! They continue to support all task forces, committees, the Board, and our members. In fact, during this pandemic, they are busier than ever.

International dues, at \$100 USD a year, breaks down to approximately \$1.92 USD a week — less than the price of a coffee at your favorite coffee shop. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I hope the information provided helps explain why dues are as important now as ever. As I said earlier, it is not just about the singing but also about the sense of community gained by having friends around the world with a common interest. To ensure that the Sweet Adelines organization continues to move forward and offer a place to gather and sing, your continued support is essential.

We hope this information answers many of your questions. And please be assured that we will continue to review ways to assist and support members during this pandemic while balancing the long-term sustainability of Sweet Adelines International. If you have further questions, please contact us at exec@sweetadelines.com.

Stay Sweet Adelines Strong.

Sweet Adelines Member Benefits

- **Member benefits**

- Discounts on sales of sheet music and other items
 - Arranged music lists
 - Published music lists
- High quality music education
 - On Demand
 - Continually being added to
 - International Education Classes
 - Arrangers Certification Program
 - Director Certification Program
 - Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Resources
- Grants and scholarships
- Options to sign up for HealthiestYou, LegalShield, and IDShield (not available in all areas)
- Access to a worldwide network of like-minded singers; friends all over the world!
- Leadership opportunities, personal growth, empowerment
- Communications from International with the latest Barbershop news, including *The Pitch Pipe*, BarbershopNOW, Spark, and Directly Speaking.
- Discounted access to events and competition
 - International Education Symposium (IES)
 - International Convention and Competition
 - Directors and Visual Leaders Seminar
 - During Covid-19, a virtual convention in October 2020 that you can relive on the Sweet Adelines website
- Periodic messages from International – and motivational videos, too!
- Opportunities to serve on a strong team of task forces and committees designed to increase member satisfaction and move the organization forward

- **Chorus benefits**

- Marketing assistance, including:
 - Customizable posters, brochures, postcards, and print ad templates
 - PR guide with PR templates, examples
 - Event marketing guide with logos, style guides
 - Guides for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube
 - Adobe PDF tutorial
- Membership growth materials, including:
 - Guide on how to attract new members and keep them
 - Virtual Global Open House resources
- Chapter Guide for successful and effective Chapter management.
- Director-specific resources
- Virtual rehearsal resources
- International and Regional support

Comments from members participating in the Small-Medium Chorus Value Proposition Task Force survey.

Question: How would you define “chorus success” within your chorus life?

We have become a family. We touch the hearts of our audiences.

Success is trust and safety leading to inclusivity in the chorus. Trust builds a unity of purpose; every member knows they belong and they are valued.

Giving performances that touch people...The connection we have with each other on and off the risers

Success is more than the singing — it's a spirit of unity and camaraderie.

Question: What would your members say is the value they receive from being members of Sweet Adelines International?

The value is in the friendships, the music, being part of the juicy harmony, and the support and caring that they give each other.

A lot of resources that SA provides...We're a small chorus in the middle of nowhere so these resources are invaluable. Since COVID, we just now discovered these resources; before, we did not know they existed.

When there's something to do - they're always there. Someone is sick, there's an event, someone needs help...they are there for you.

It's nice that if there's a conflict, International and region can mediate and people on the management team are protected. Greatest thing is just that International is there.

The education. Director would always reference where she learned something and it really allowed the members to understand how valuable the overall organization is to their growing and learning as singers and a chorus.

Chorus was in revitalization – International staff raised them up when they were desperate. Keep asking for help! It really helped them feel the love and support from headquarters.

SA's professionalism and high standards are the real value; it's not just a loose get-together of choral singing.

To belong in a woman's organization that supports all backgrounds and doesn't see them but sees women who want to sing together and build lifelong friendships is a big one. Also there is a pride of being connected to SA. The commitment in bettering everyone, challenging us to be known for our amazing talents and strengths as well as holding to a standard like no other organization.

Being a part of a worldwide group of diverse singers with a focus of spreading love through music

The chorus would not last long without being affiliated with Headquarters.

Added value from International right now with the resources, videos that have come out.

Sweet Adelines International is the foundation of everything, judging, regionals...

Membership Changes for 2021-22

Change 1

Additional year extension for prospective chapters

- Prospective chapters are not able to recruit in person, nor perform as a Sweet Adelines chorus virtually, making it difficult for them to attract the required members to charter

Change 2

Waive the minimum number of members required to renew charter for the 2021-22 fiscal year charter period

- Must have all required chapter officer positions filled, plus a director
- Those chapters that do not have the required number due to COVID will still renew, rather than disband or go into revitalization

Change 3

120-day grace period for all membership renewals through December, 2021

- Members currently have a 60-day grace period

Change 4

Decrease charter renewal fee by 50%

Change 5

Reduce quartet registration/renewal fee by 50% to \$50 USD from May 1, 2021 – July 31, 2021

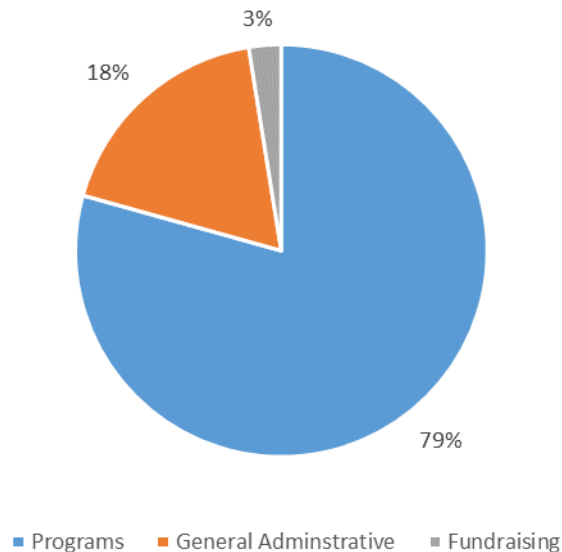
Change 6

\$400 USD stipend to regions for virtual meeting platform

Current Financial Analysis

How does my \$100 USD in International dues get spent?

How Does My \$100 Get Spent?



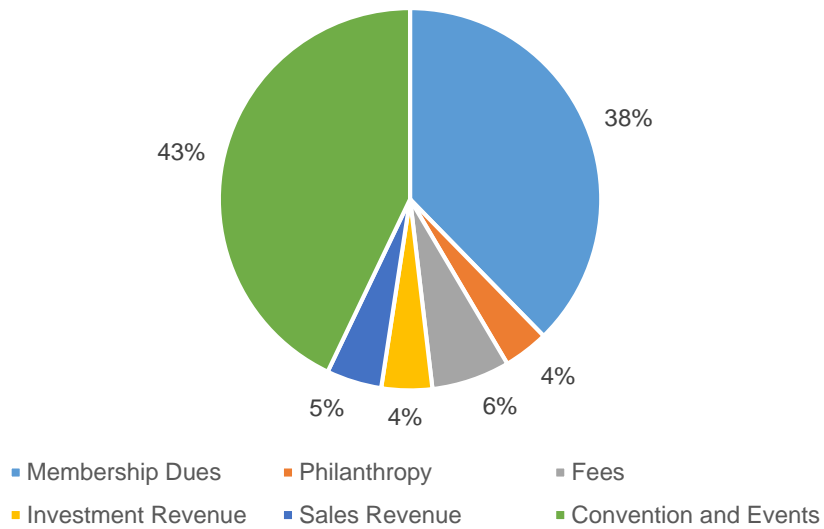
Program expense includes items like the following:

- Education: Administrative expenses for programs such as the Judging Program, Educational Scholarships, Leadership education, Arranger Certification, International Faculty, Director education, Young Women in Harmony
- Communications & Publications: Creation and production of *The Pitch Pipe* magazine, e-newsletters, website, creation of marketing materials, external marketing and public relations
- Membership: Internationally funded visits,* chapter visits,* prospective chapter administration, satellite materials

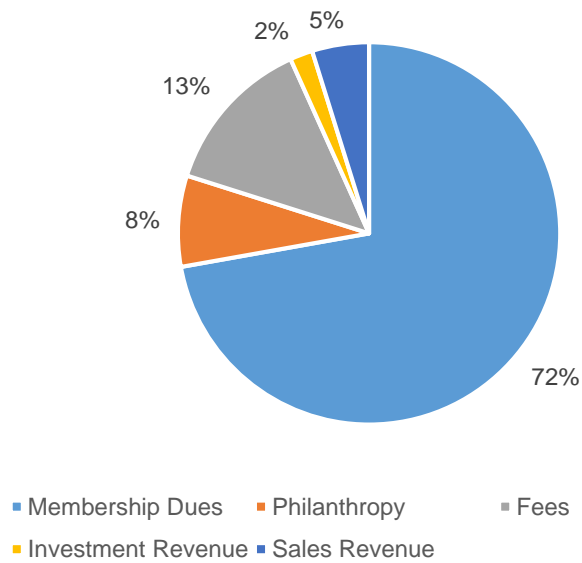
*During pre- and post-COVID

Sources of Operating Revenue

Pre-Covid Sources of Operating Revenue

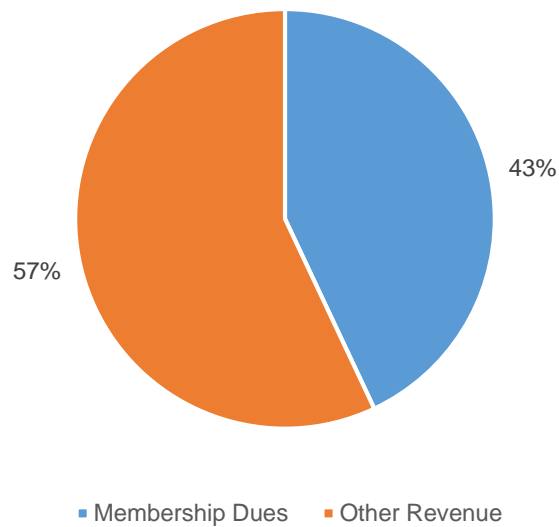


Current Sources of Operating Revenue

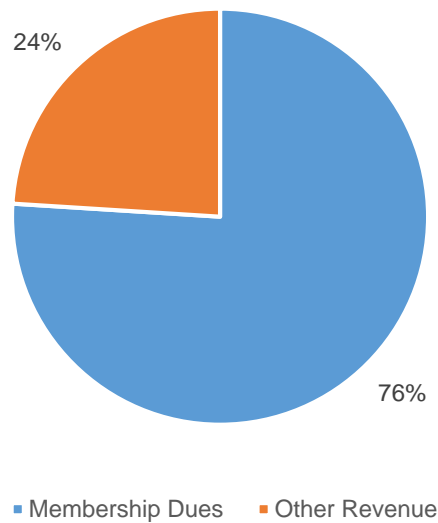


Sources of Revenue

With Convention



Without Convention



**Thank you for reviewing and stay Sweet Adelines Strong
until we can safely join together in song again!**