

Your Complete Guide to Sorority Recruitment

By Amanda First • Campus Life August 9, 2018

Round 1: Open House

What you do:

An older sorority girl, who has temporarily disaffiliated from her chapter to be your guide (often known as a Rho Gamma or Rho Chi), will lead you and a bunch of other PNMs—potential new members—from house to house. When the clock strikes the hour, the door will fly open and you'll see dozens of sorority girls screaming and dancing. A sorority girl will grab your arm and lead you to a chair. You'll talk for about five minutes, and then another girl will come over, so you can talk to her instead. This will happen until you have talked to three or four girls. After about 20 minutes, the rush chair will make a speech, and you might hear a funny story or do a short activity before you're ushered out. At the end of the day, you'll write down which chapters you liked the best and cut a few houses.

What you wear:

The rule of thumb when it comes to dressing for recruitment is to always overdress a little. Round 1, you should dress like you're going out for ice cream with your friends: dark jeans or simple shorts, cute flats or boots and a nice top or sweater. Don't wear too much jewelry, and avoid low-cut or too-tight tops; you don't want to look like you're going clubbing. And take off your watch—nothing says you're not interested in a conversation like checking the time, and it's a good idea to just avoid any temptation altogether.

What you talk about:

Keep it light. You'll only be able to talk to each girl for a few minutes, and at first you'll hear yourself talking about your hometown and your major so much you'll think you're going insane. If you can manage it, try to have a more interesting conversation—the girls will remember you and keep you around if your conversation was more interesting than everyone else's. Bring up something interesting you did over the summer, or a club you're involved in on campus; it's an easy way to distinguish yourself and get noticed.

Round 2: Philanthropy and House Tours

What you do:

Round 2 activities vary by school—sometimes it will include a craft, a philanthropy presentation or a skit—but typically it will involve a tour of each house. By this round you have cut some houses, and some houses have cut you, so you go to fewer houses throughout the day and each round is longer, about 40 minutes. You will still talk to more than one girl—usually about three—before taking a tour of the house and learning more about the chapter's activities and structure. For example, you may hear a presentation on the chapter's national and local philanthropies or learn about how much it would cost to live there. Again, you rank the sororities you saw at the end of the day and cut a few more houses.

What you wear

Every round gets a little dressier for Round 2. Think brunch with your mom and step it up in a cute skirt or nice shorts and a pretty top. A lot of girls will be wearing wedges, but flats are still totally fine. You can definitely wear subtle jewelry this round, and have a little fun with your makeup—try a tasteful pink lipstick and some bronzer, for instance.

What you talk about: (similar to Open House)

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Round 3: Sisterhood

What you do:

Again, Round 3 activities vary, and many schools do not do a skit. If your school doesn't do one, this could be called the "Sisterhood Round," and in some cases house tours are during Round 3. If there is a skit, you will talk to two or three girls before watching some of the most talented members of each chapter put on a hilarious performance, often involving pop culture references and songs. This is a great chance to get to know the personality of each house, so you can gauge better where you'll feel most comfortable. You'll rank the sororities again at the end of the day, leaving you with only three houses.

What you wear:

For Round 3, dress like you would for a dinner date. A sundress is a great idea with a pair of wedges and a statement necklace. You want to look very put-together, but not too formal, so leave the satin for pref round.

What you talk about

By now, you've learned a little about the chapter's activities, philanthropy and structure, and you may have some questions. Feel free to ask them this round, and also make sure you get more into who you are and what makes you tick, including your activities and goals. Express your feelings about rush and ask questions about sororities in general, but don't make any overt references to how badly you want to be in a particular chapter or talk about other houses. Through your conversations, you can convince girls that you would fit in at their house.

Round 4: Preference

What you do:

This round is the most serious, and you often only talk to one girl for the entire time—a full hour at most schools. While during every other round the girls dance, cheer and generally try to emphasize the fun aspects of their sororities, in pref round it's all about the traditions, principles and values of each chapter. You'll hear from the girls about what their sorority means to them, and see a ceremony that emphasizes the essence of each house. Often there is a presentation involving the seniors, and you learn a lot about the traditions of each chapter. At the end of the day you "pref" two or three sororities in order of where you'd most like to pledge, and you are matched up through a computer system to a house.

What you wear

The dress code for this round is semiformal, but again, most girls dress a little nicer. Think a bar mitzvah, or a wedding rehearsal dinner. You can't go wrong with a classy dress! Wear your nicest heels, and, a nice necklace—if you have them, a strand of pearls adds a polished touch.

What you talk about

In the last round, the conversation should get a lot heavier. You should talk about what drew you to each chapter, why you think you would fit in there and how you feel about rush in general. Also, show the girls why you'd be an asset to their house by speaking intelligently and displaying your depth—they won't want to give a bid to anyone who doesn't seem like they would add a lot to the chapter. This round is to seal the deal—you have one hour to show the girls who you really are and why you should spend the rest of your college experience with them.

What NOT to Say (B4)

There are five topics that are absolutely off-limits for rush: boys, booze, Bible and bids. Gushing about a frat guy that you're seeing when it turns out the girl who is rushing you used to date him will certainly hurt your chances at being invited back to her house, and bragging about all the shots you downed the night before doesn't exactly showcase your poise and class to a group of women. As for religion and politics, these are way too controversial topics for recruitment—leave those conversations for when these strangers become your sisters. ***But the number one fatal flaw of rush is to talk about other houses, or ask outright if you can get a bid at a particular house. It makes you look desperate, catty and underhanded, and it completely goes against the rules of the Panhellenic Council.*** Resist temptation—you'll find out where you belong soon enough.

So avoid no-no topics, come prepared and, most importantly, be yourself. You are sure to end up in a sorority that's perfect for you!