

# FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION

## BID PACKET

**FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**BID SUMMARY WORKSHEET**

**COSTS** Each group willing to bid on the State Convention must provide the following cost figures to the Florida State Convention Committees of Areas 14 and 15 by January of the year the group wants to bid and then to the Joint Advisory Committee in May. If the bid is **NOT** presented and approved by the Florida State Convention Committees of Areas 14 and 15 and by the FSC Joint Advisory Committee, the group will **NOT** be allowed to bid. Each bidder should expect other bids for the convention.

**A. REGISTRATION AND HOTEL – GENERAL**

1. Proposed Dates of Convention - \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ - \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ - See P. 4.
2. Registration - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Regular \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Early Registration - See P. 4.
3. Budget - See P. 5.
4. Host Hotel - \_\_\_\_\_ Total Rooms Available \_\_\_\_\_ - See Pgs. 5-7.
5. Hotel Rooms – Host Hotel - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Single/Double \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Triple Quad - See P. 7.
  - a. Overflow Hotel I - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Single/Double \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Triple Quad; Total Rooms \_\_\_\_ - See P. 7.
  - b. Overflow Hotel II- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Single/Double \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Triple Quad; Total Rooms \_\_\_\_ - See P. 7.
6. Audio Visual - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax) - See P. 7.
7. Parking - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Valet \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Self Park; Host Hotel Total Parking Spaces \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 7.
8. Shuttle - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 7. Overflow Hotel I Total Parking Spaces \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 7.
9. Resort Fee - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 8. Overflow Hotel II Total Parking Spaces \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 7.
10. Other Fees - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 8.

**B. HOTEL - FOOD AND BEVERAGE**

1. Saturday Night Banquet - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax) - See P. 8.
2. Friday Night Banquet (optional) - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax) - See P. 8.
3. Coffee - \$ \_\_\_\_\_/per gallon (includes service fee + tax) - See P. 9.
4. Friday Night Ice Cream Social (optional) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax) - See P. 8.
5. Saturday Night Ice Cream Social (optional) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax) - See P. 8.

**C. RECREATION EVENTS**

1. Golf Tournament - \$ \_\_\_\_ (includes greens fee + tax and optional golf shirt, lunch - See P. 9.
2. Horseshoe Tournament - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax & optional t-shirt) - See P. 9.
3. Run/Walk - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes route permit, police + insurance & other fees) - See P. 10.
4. Volleyball Tournament - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax & optional t-shirt) - See P. 9.
5. Tennis Tournament - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (includes service fee + tax & optional t-shirt) - See P. 9.

**D. GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Chair- \_\_\_\_\_ - See P. 11.
2. Agree to adhere to Traditions, GSO Convention Guidelines - \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No - See Pgs. 11-12.
3. Intergroup and District Approval - \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No - See P. 12.
4. Area Approval - \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No - See P. 12.
5. Joint Advisory Comm. Area Approval - \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Approval Date - See Pgs. 2, 12.

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**PREAMBLE- BACKGROUND**

The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee originally put this bid packet together in January, 1996 to assist interested parties in preparing bids for future state conventions. The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee has updated the packet to reflect the experience of the State Conventions, Chairs and Treasurers since then. The updates also reflect the decisions of the North Florida Area, Area 14, and South Florida Area, Area 15, to become more involved in the Florida State Convention. These bidding requirements should not be viewed as a daunting scavenger hunt list, but rather as some organizational ideas *flowing from our past experience strength and hope with conventions which* are meant to help each convention put on the best possible event in a financially responsible manner from the beginning.

This packet discusses significant areas related to a successful Florida State Convention:

Hotel Contract Issues and Negotiations  
Site Selection  
Questions to Ask  
Recent Convention Experience  
Site Selection Meeting

We hope this packet helps you to bring the Florida State Convention to your District.  
Good Luck!

**I. STATE CONVENTION DATES**

The Florida State Convention is historically held in the last two weeks of July or the first two weeks of August. In International Convention years, 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025, etc., the convention is held during the first two weeks of August. If Florida is hosting the Southeastern Conference, 2010, 2016, 2022, 2028, etc., the convention must be held during the first two weeks of August. The bidder must also review the event schedules of the General Service Office in New York to make sure there is no conflict with the proposed convention date. Note: if your convention is to be held in conjunction with the Southeastern Conference there are additional requirements that must be adhered to so check with your Delegate or the Southeastern Regional Trustee about those requirements.

**II. REGISTRATION FEE**

The Florida State Convention Registration Fee has varied from \$28 to \$35 in recent years. Every effort should be made to keep the Registration Fee down as low as possible so more people can afford to attend, especially those new to the Fellowship. In the past, the cost of coffee has been the single largest expense so you might consider ways to keep that cost from escalating registration fees.

Refunds for registration, merchandise orders, and recreation activities will only be issued until 90 days prior to the start of the Florida State Convention.

### III. BUDGET

Past experience has shown that preparation of and adherence to a realistic and reasonable budget is essential to a financially successful convention. It is so important that North Florida, Area 14, requires any prospective bid committee to submit a budget based upon a conservative attendance projection. Although past conventions have had attendance between 2,000 and 2,800 it is rare that you will get more than 1,800 pre-registrations. If you base your working budget on income of 1,800 registrations, you can open up expenditures near the convention date if your registrations begin to exceed that estimate.

For budget purposes, income is based upon your beginning attendance estimate and your registration fees. Although there are other income sources, for working budgets it has been found that registration fee income is the most solid figure.

Major expenses are cost of coffee, speaker expenses, entertainment, decorations, audio/visual costs, and committee costs. Sports events and other activities that have an additional fee for participation should be priced to be self-supporting. The Joint State Convention Advisory Committee keeps final financial reports of past conventions which will give you a very good idea of what past conventions have spent in these areas and from which you can base your projected budget. One of these is attached to this bid package as Appendix E for your convenience.

### IV. SELECTION OF HOTEL/CONVENTION FACILITY

The past attendance at the Florida State Convention has varied between 2,000 and 2,800. The peak attendance will be Saturday night. A bid must be able to accommodate that number. If the facility does not have a single room that can seat the full number, you will need to make arrangements for all expected registrants by using breakout rooms and video feeds or some other arrangements.

In our experience, the main criteria for potential facilities are size and cost. Generally hotels will be happy to work with bid committees to offer a proposal or "hotel package" to attract the convention because hotels want to sell their services. Most facilities will charge for use of their meeting rooms during the Convention, along with charges for any audio-visual support and food/beverage they provide. As a general rule of thumb, the total cost of the facility should be no more than the total amount the Convention could expect to receive from attendee registrations. The hotel will usually provide meeting rooms at no cost if the room night block guarantee is met. In dealing with a hotel, the guarantees need to be high enough to interest the hotel in having the convention, but low enough *to make sure* the minimum guarantee is met. Many hotels give this on a sliding scale, based on your room nights. Make sure that the meeting space charges are for the entire convention, not per day. There is usually a penalty for not meeting the guarantee, which can be either an added cost for the meeting rooms or a specific monetary cost. **Generally, it is better to be very conservative in any guarantee**, whether it be *for* room nights or food/beverage service. *The reason is that it is easier to deal with the hotel to add than it is to try to reduce the guaranteed amount.*

A conservative room night block is between 1,300 to 1,500 for the nights of the convention. *The bid also needs to include the total rooms available at the host hotel.*

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All hotels have cutoff dates. These are a standard in the industry and are usually 30 days out. We all know of conferences where the hotel has room but won't give the conference rate after the cutoff date. *As such, we should try to negotiate the cutoff date to be three weeks before the convention. You should also try to negotiate a clause that states if the hotel is less than 80% full, they will honor the conference rate up to and including the convention.* It is also usual that the rate is good three days before and after the convention.

One comp room *night* per 50 is common and standard in the industry, *but some hotels will knock it down to one comp room night per 45.* These rooms can be used for speaker rooms or hospitality rooms. Additionally, you should try to get at least one *complimentary* suite for the chair and/or any officer that needs to be on site during the whole convention.

Make sure the contract states that only *the one or two people* the committee designates to the hotel in writing before the convention can sign *authorizations for charges to the master account on behalf of* the committee. It should *specifically* state that any charge signed by *anyone else* will not be paid by the committee.

Sometimes a hotel will use conventions like ours as a good time to do renovation. Consider a clause that if major construction or renovation of the hotel is taking place during the conference that there will be compensation, possibly additional free coffee or any meeting room cost is waived. The same is true if the swimming pool is closed for any day of the convention.

*Bidders should also consider negotiating* a specific clause concerning the ending time of any dance. Try to get it set as late as possible and meet with your convention coordinator in advance to make sure there are no misunderstandings. Frequently the manager on duty is not the manager you were dealing with, and *thus you should* always have a copy of your contract available.

You *also* need to make sure *the contract has a clause* that allows cancellation of the contract without penalty in the event of a natural disaster like a fire, hurricane or act of war. Since 9/11 a new clause has become standard: "In the event of an unforeseen act of terror that prevents or disrupts travel in the United State (air, train, bus, or private vehicle) the Florida State Convention will not be held responsible for not meeting its contractual requirements with the hotel." Especially if the convention is to be held in August, you should try to include a provision dealing with a Hurricane/Tropical Storm watch for the State during the week of the convention such as "Should the area be under a hurricane watch or warning within \_\_\_\_ days of the convention, the event will be canceled without penalty."

Some hotels will try to book as many major events into a weekend as possible to maximize their revenues. This can impact your convention in terms of common space and room nights available. Request a penalty clause in the contract if the hotel is over booked by other events.

If you have not made a final selection of your proposed hotel, some Visitor/Convention Bureaus have been great help in identifying facilities that meet the needed criteria and have been helpful in making the initial approach to those hotels. You might consider such a resource if one is available for your area.

**V. HOTEL ROOM RATES**

The bidder needs to obtain rates for a single/double room and a triple/quad room. When possible, you want the same rate for single, double, triple and quad. The bidder needs to make sure the hotel will allow up to four people to stay in a room to allow more people to attend by sharing rooms. Usually hotels will try to charge more for three or four people in a room. Also, the bidder needs to obtain rates for Suites, Deluxe Rooms and/or Villas if possible. The hotel room rates should be good for three days before the State Convention starts and for three days after the Convention ends.

The bidder also should obtain rates for single/double and triple/quad rooms at two overflow hotels at a minimum. Preferably, the overflow hotels will be within walking distance of the host hotel. *The bidder should also provide the total rooms available at the overflow hotels.*

Your bid should specifically show:

1. Total number of rooms required (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights).
2. Total Special Needs Accessible Rooms (refrigerators for medical needs, i.e., insulin, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.)
3. Total number of rooms available for convention
4. Guarantee and Deposit requirements, if any
5. Check-in and out times
6. Room block cutoff date
7. Refund policy for hotel reservations in the event of cancellation by Attendee.

**VI. AUDIO VISUAL CHARGES**

The bidder needs to make sure the hotel can do audio and visual broadcasting of the Friday and Saturday Night Speaker Meetings. This usually includes at least one big screen for the main ballroom and one for the overflow ballroom at a minimum. The bidder also needs to include the cost of microphones in each breakout room, if any. The group should try to negotiate as many free microphones as they can. More importantly, groups should negotiate the right to bring in their own equipment. This can substantially reduce costs since hotels frequently subcontract out their audio-visual needs and those folks try to maximize their earnings. Also, the hotel will charge both a service fee and extraordinary amounts for labor and set up. Your prices must include the service fees and labor setup costs. Have them state in the contract the exact charge, if any, for an electrician if one is needed to connect power for the DJ, taper or independent audio/visual contractor. *Also*, have them state in the contract that the DJ, an independent audio/visual contractor, and the taper can go in and out of the hotel on the loading dock at no cost or charge.

**VII. PARKING AND SHUTTLE**

*The bidder should negotiate lower rates for valet and self-parking than the usual rates for the hotel. The bidder also needs to provide the total number of parking spaces at the host and overflow hotels. There also needs to be sufficient parking spaces both for the people who will be staying at the convention hotel and also for local residents and others who will be “day-tripping” the convention. If, for example, your attendance is 2,500 you will need about 1,700 to 2,000 parking places. If this cannot be accommodated on-site, there should be some provision*

for overflow. Some hotels have a shuttle service that can be provided at cost or free, but this is an area that should be covered in advance and *at* the site selection meeting.

#### VIII. RESORT AND OTHER FEES

Make sure that any such fees are fully understood. *If they are required, they need to be disclosed in your bid and at the site selection meeting.* Surprise costs and higher fees create a lot of bad feelings.

#### IX. BANQUETS, ICE CREAM SOCIALS, AND OTHER FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Historically there is a Saturday night banquet in conjunction with the Saturday night meeting. Two ways of accommodating this is by having the banquet in the main speaker room or having the banquet in a separate room and moving the diners into *reserved seating* in the main speaker room. Either choice has advantages and disadvantages. The Saturday night banquet in conjunction with the main speaker meeting is virtually a requirement of the convention. The Friday night banquet, while usual, is not a requirement. This is a large source of income for the hotel and they will want to maximize their profits by numbers of meals and the cost. **This is an area where guarantees are dangerous.** It is usually better to negotiate a fixed, reasonable cost, including tax and gratuity charges, and either keep the guarantee as small as possible or put the final count off as long as possible (72 hours out). This prevents a major loss if people decide not to attend the banquet. Second, it becomes the single biggest leverage you can have with the hotel.

Your bid should show:

1. Banquet facilities: will they be seated in the main room or another room.
2. Tax and Gratuity Percentages – should be included
3. Guarantee Policy - Percentage of Change – If 75% of Guarantee, No Charge
4. Time Guarantee Required - Number of Hours Before Meal, *i.e.* 48-72 hrs
5. Expected Attendance for Banquet. *Note: Buffets are more expensive than banquets, but some conventions have had them*

Ice cream socials are often provided. *If so*, your bid should show:

1. Cost per Order
2. Guarantee Required

Many hotels *also* have food and beverage outlets within the facility that can be used by attendees. Your bid should show:

1. The number of outlets within the hotel
2. The price range
3. Any reservation policy

*An additional food/beverage consideration is whether the hotel is willing to set up additional food outlets in the lobby or other areas such as a box lunch, continental breakfast, snacks, etc.* These have helped meet demand at peak times. If so, what are the costs of providing these services and is it affordable

X. **COFFEE**

**HISTORICALLY, COFFEE IS THE LARGEST SINGLE EXPENSE OF A CONVENTION. IF YOU PROVIDE ESSENTIALLY UNLIMITED COFFEE YOU CAN EXPECT TO CONSUME AT LEAST 1,000 GALLONS AT WHATEVER PRICE COFFEE IS PROVIDED.**

In most large hotels, you cannot brew your own, *or buy the coffee in bulk and have them brew it.* Try to get a good discount and try to get 100 to 200 gallons as a condition of the contract. Remember, a coffee set up at *most* hotels *includes* hot water and under that condition hot water is charged as if it were coffee. Make sure your contract has a provision that hot water for tea will be free.

To keep the *coffee* expense down, you *should* consider limiting the number of hours coffee *is* provided. Use small cups, *no larger than 6 ounces*, to curtail waste. Absolutely *include in the contract* the requirement that coffee *must be signed for by one or two specified committee members only.* (consider *having* a specific person whose only function is to monitor and request coffee from the hotel).

It may be time to consider *eliminating* the tradition of providing free coffee at the convention in order to keep registration costs down. Most large hotels *also now* have Starbucks or similar outlets where coffee is readily available *which will help keep coffee consumption down.* The other alternative is to establish *a budget amount to spend for coffee and then* limit service to only that amount no matter what. *If your walk-in registrations exceed your budget estimate, you can provide more coffee as income permits.*

XI. **RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

A. **GOLF TOURNAMENT**

1. Is the Golf Course On Property?
2. If not, how far away and how will transportation be arranged?
3. What is the cost per player?
4. Will lunch, shirts or prizes be given? If so, what is the cost?
5. Number of players required? **BE CAREFUL OF GUARANTEEING A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PLAYERS WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE CONVENTION.** Most courses require some minimum number in order to commit to the tournament. Again, it is better to start small and have the option to increase the participants later.

B. **VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT**

Does the hotel require insurance for sports events on property?

C. **HORSESHOES TOURNAMENT**

Does the hotel require insurance for sports events on property?

D. **TENNIS TOURNAMENT**

1. Number of courts located on premises

2. Cost per player, including balls, drinks, prizes, etc.
3. Is there a Pro Assistance Fee for scheduling, etc.
4. Does the hotel require insurance for sports events on property?

**E. RUN/WALK**

Will the run/walk be on hotel property?

Does the hotel require insurance for sports events on property?

**XII. MERCHANDISE**

During the Florida State Convention, the host committee generally makes available for purchase a variety of merchandise items, such as t-shirts, golf/polo shirts, denim shirts, caps, mugs, and tote bags. Only vendors contracted with the direct sanction of the Florida State Convention are allowed to operate at the Florida State Convention.

**XIII. HOTEL MEETING SPACE AND EQUIPMENT**

**A. MEETING SPACE**

1. One thing you want to be as clear as possible is the use of the convention area by other events. By Friday afternoon, you will have your peak attendance and if there are other events, there is the possibility of complaints and disputes over shared space. Try to get a guarantee that, especially on Friday and Saturday, no other events will be scheduled for your main areas, including the registration space.
2. Is there adequate Data Management Space, Electrical Outlets for Computers, Printers, etc?
3. Is there a Conference Room for Daily Committee Chair Meetings? *This should be negotiated as part of the package provided.*
4. What number of Breakout/Meeting Rooms is available? *This should be negotiated as part of the package provided.*
5. *Negotiate for* room security, with afterhours access for Chair, Data Management, etc.
6. *Negotiate for* Archives Security; i.e., a Locking Room with After Hours Security
7. How many Meeting Rooms are available? *This should be negotiated as part of the package provided.*
8. Is there an adequate Pre-Function Registration Area, preferably near the entrance to the convention space:
  - Is there a secure site nearby where your registration computers can be located to expedite the registration paperwork?
  - Is the space large enough for Pre and On-Site Registration?
  - Is there room for Tape Display and Sales Space
  - Is there accessible and visible Committee Table Space for Hospitality, Information, Golf, Tennis, Run/Walk, Merchandise Sales, and *other committees?*
9. Are there Hospitality Areas or Rooms?
10. Is there a Smoking/ Non-Smoking room or area?

11. Is the convention area Special Needs Accessible – Wheelchair, Walker, etc.? If not, what special arrangements can be made to provide access and what, if any, cost?
12. Are there any On-Site Personnel Fees?

## **B. EQUIPMENT**

There are numerous small expenses that can add up quickly such as additional cost for tables and chairs for your display area, sports events, marathon meetings, etc. Try to negotiate that those will be included in the total package or that you get a certain number without additional charge. *Some of these smaller charges and expenses are:*

1. Are copy, facsimile, e-mail facilities available and accessible?
2. How many tables - various sizes, 8', 6', etc.- are available and what, if any, cost per table?
3. How many chairs owned by hotel and/or rented by hotel at its cost will be available and is there a cost to set up and take down for various meetings?
4. *Are Two Way Radios/Walkie Talkies available?*
5. What Stage, Platforms are provided and cost, if any, of modifying if needed?
6. Are steps for various platforms, handrails *included? If not, what is the cost?*
7. Are carpeting and skirting for platforms *included? If not, what is the cost?*
8. Are lecterns or podiums *included? If not, what is the cost?*
9. Are easels for signs *included? If not, what is the cost, or can you provide your own?*

## **XIV. HOTEL GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Negotiate the best hotel rate for one room night. Then, ask the hotel representative to reduce the rate by 10% commission an event planner usually receives since we do not use one.
2. Complimentary room for Convention Chair
3. Complimentary rooms: typically one room per 50 room nights, *ask for 1 per 45 room nights.*
4. Ask if any hotel renovations and/or changes are planned.
5. Signs and banners – *negotiate to have hotel hang 2-3 for free, cost for each additional banner.*
6. Are there hotel requirements for approval of fliers? - If so, get approval before printing.
7. *Is there a hotel sound system for the recorder to plug into?*
8. *Determine if there is a Noise Ordinance on outside music.*
9. *Obtain phone and emergency phone list for key hotel support staff.*
10. Does the hotel have equipment repair personnel on staff?
11. Are the ballroom capacities actual seating capacity or not? What is the difference between *ballroom seating capacity with banquet tables in the ballroom and with the banquet tables in a separate room?*

## **XV. CHAIR, TREASURER, SECRETARY, AND COMMITTEE**

State the prior convention and/or service experience of the core committee, i.e. the chair, treasurer, and other identified committee members. Prior convention experience is not absolutely necessary, but there should be a demonstration that the core committee has a

history of service in AA so that there is reason to believe that the commitments made by the committee will be met. It is a fact, fair or not, that in our dealings with the outside world we affect the way AA as a whole is judged.

The chair and treasurer, at a minimum, should be familiar with the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and committed to their observance, particularly:

- The 5th Tradition of singleness of purpose in regard to the program, meeting topics and speakers;
- The 11th Tradition of Anonymity at the public level is important any time we deal with outside agencies such as hotels, convention centers and the necessary publicity required to get the word out. Inform the hotel staff concerning our Traditions of Anonymity and singleness of purpose to avoid unintended controversies. It is suggested that the convention be listed by the hotel as "Florida State Convention – Banquet";
- The 6th Tradition requires that care should also be taken not to imply affiliation with any outside entity by using their corporate logos in convention materials;
- Finally, the 7th Tradition states that we are fully self-supporting so no special requests should be made on the grounds that we are Alcoholics Anonymous. However, the Florida State Convention does have non-profit status and thus we can take any offer that is made to all other such non-profit entities.

GSO publishes Guidelines for Conventions. It is strongly urged that the bid committee be familiar with *these Guidelines* and follow *their* suggestions. As with all GSO materials, these guidelines reflect the experience, strength and hope of past conventions. There is no reason to reinvent the wheel and make the same mistakes that others have made when their collective experience is easily and readily available if we will only read it. Also, the Joint Advisory Committee of the Florida State Convention was established to provide an accessible source of past convention experience. *Its* members are willing to share what they have learned with you if you ask.

#### **XVI. SUGGESTIONS TO COMPLETE BEFORE BIDDING**

The AA service structure can provide valuable assistance to the convention because it disseminates AA information to groups in the area and may provide a resource on AA Traditions. Statements of support from the Area, Intergroup (if there is one), and surrounding Districts are part of the bid package. A brief letter "To Whom It May Concern" from the appropriate person will suffice. The purpose of this requirement is to make sure Bid Committees are in contact with the AA service structure. *Other suggestions include:*

1. Have Flyers and/or Brochures to hand out before the Bid Presentation Meeting.
2. Include a Power Point or Video in your Presentation, if possible.
3. Organize Bid Material.
4. *Adopt and Maintain a Positive Attitude and Enthusiasm.*
5. Wear Business Attire When Presenting the Bid Package.
6. Be Willing.

**XVII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT SITE SELECTION**

1. What is the room rate?
2. What is the price per gallon of coffee?
  - Can we make or buy our own coffee have hotel provide the servers?
3. How many complimentary gallons of coffee are provided?
4. Do you have the support of the local Intergroup and district?
5. Will there be seating in the ballroom for the speaker meeting for those who do not attend the banquet once the banquet is over?
6. Are there child care facilities at the hotel?

**XVIII. CONTRACT ISSUES AND NEGOTIATIONS AFTER FSC**

After the completion of the convention, the hotel will prepare an itemized invoice of charges. The draft of this invoice may take several weeks based upon our prior experience. Do not be alarmed. This is completely normal.

When the invoice is received ensure that the Convention Chair and Treasurer are extremely familiar with the contract. *Make sure* the invoice complies with the contract.

A master billing account is established for the convention, *but only* authorized charges are *allowed to be charged* to the account. Speaker rooms that may be provided at no cost to the speaker are typically billed to the master account. Then, *the hotel posts* credits to the account to reduce the amount of the bill in accordance with the complimentary room policy. It is our experience that complimentary rooms may not be credited back to the invoice.

- Audio/Visual requirements - ensure that these charges comply with the contract.
- Tennis fees - if the courts are not up to standard, do not hesitate in requesting a discount and/or credit for the amount of the billing, depending on the court conditions.
- Be aware of the contract provision with respect to chairs that the hotel may rent. Ensure that charges are not included in the bill for these items if the hotel agreed to provide chairs free of charge.
- Shuttle vans - if the parking at the facility is not adequate, request that the facility provide shuttle service from parking areas, at no charge to the convention.
- Hotel may have an exit conference with the Chairman and/or Treasurer of the convention. The purpose is to determine satisfaction with various departments and overall satisfaction with the facility. Tact, courtesy and honesty will go along way when dealing with these personnel. Remember that the hotel is a service industry and it is their intention to provide good service.
- Specific details provided at this time will be helpful when the master bill is received. If there are areas needing improvement, let it be known. These comments will be helpful later on if there are areas which you may request that the hotel make an adjustment for service and/or goods that were not up to expectations and/or standards.
- Areas of concern may be disclosed subsequent to the exit conference. It is a good idea to communicate these as well as any other significant areas to hotel management.
- Hotel management will generally make adjustments to the master bill and definitely have a good faith response to concerns.

**XIX. SALES TAX, TAX EXEMPT STATUS, INCOME TAX RETURNS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Florida State Convention is exempt from State of Florida sales tax. The Certificate is reviewed every five years with next renewal due in 2010. Connie DeWeese currently does the tax return. The tax number is registered to the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee. In order to maintain tax-exempt status, we are required to give scholarships to members who would not be able to attend otherwise. Sample letters for scholarships are attached. The Chair needs to review the hotel invoice to ensure that sales tax is not included on the master account for items such as hotel rooms, banquet service and/or meals. We have requested removal of these items in the past.

**XX. DISTRIBUTION OF FUND BALANCE**

Historically, the excess funds of the Convention, after providing the seed money for the convention two years out and the Joint State Convention Advisory Committee, have been distributed within the service structure. *Traditionally*, a percentage of the excess funds is provided to the AIA non service structure in the same percentage as the AIA non registrations are to the total registrations. The remaining funds are usually distributed to the local Intergroup/Central Office, the two Area Assemblies, the General Service Board/Office and the local Districts in whatever percentage the Committee decides. It is also strongly suggested that a contribution be made to the State Convention Prudent Reserve Fund. *This fund* is administered by the Joint State Convention Advisory Committee, but is separate from that committee's operating budget. Also, in the two years prior to an International Convention, the Convention has contributed funds to a Florida hospitality suite at the International.

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**APPENDIX A - PAST FSC LOCATIONS AND THEMES**

#	YEAR	LOCATION	THEME	HOTEL
1	1957	Miami		
2	1958	Orlando		
3	1959	Ft. Lauderdale		
4	1960	Jacksonville		
5	1961	Clearwater		
6	1962	Sarasota		
7	1963	Cocoa Beach		
8	1964	West Palm Beach		
9	1965	Clearwater	Our Three Legacies	
10	1966	Hollywood		
11	1967	Orlando		
12	1968	Clearwater	How It Works	Jack Tar Hotel
13	1969	Daytona Beach		
14	1970	Miami Beach	Fontainebleau	Wesley Parrish
15	1971	Hollywood	We Are Responsible	Diplomat
16	1972	Marco	Island	Easy Does It
17	1973	Palm Beach	Came To Believe	The Breakers
18	1974	Hollywood	In All Our Affairs	Diplomat
19	1975	Orlando	Half Measures	Sheraton
20	1976	Miami Beach	Freedom Today thru A.A.	Deauville
21	1977	Palm Beach	There Is A Solution	The Breakers
22	1978	Hollywood	Welcome To The Fellowship	Diplomat
23	1979	Lakeland	Back To Basics	
24	1980	Orlando	Language Of The Heart	
25	1981	Palmbeach	A Vision For You	The Breakers
26	1982	Boca Raton	Flight To Freedom	Boca Resort Club
27	1983	Tarpon Springs	Walking Hand In Hand	Innisbrook
28	1984	Boca Raton	Fellowship Of The Spirit	Boca Hotel C
29	1985	Tampa	Miracles Of A.A.	Hyatt Regency
30	1986	Orlando	Pass It On	Wyndham
31	1987	Miami	The Joy Is In The Journey	
32	1988	Jacksonville	Share The Sparkle	
33	1989	Hollywood	Journey To Freedom	
34	1990	Daytona	Beach Follow The Fellowship	
35	1991	Tampa	Gratitude Is Action	Hyatt Regency
36	1992	Palm Beach	Sharing The Gift	PGA
37	1993	Orlando	The Fellowship Of The Spirit	
38	1994	Naples	A Celebration Of Sobriety	
39	1995	N. Palm Beach	A Gathering Of Miracles	PGA

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#	YEAR	LOCATION	THEME	HOTEL
40	1996	Bonaventure	Sobriety A Design For Living	Bonaventure
41	1997	Orlando	Fun-N-The Fourth Dimension	
42	1998	Naples	Your Imagination Will Be Fired	Registry
43	1999	Daytona Beach	Its In The Book	Adam's Mark
44	2000	Orlando	We Stood At The Turning Point	
45	2001	Miami	The Steps We Took	Doral
46	2002	Tampa	It Works, It Really Does	Hyatt
47	2003	Naples	On Awakening, We Came to Believe	Registry
48	2004	Jacksonville	The Bridge ... Toward Faith	Adam's Mark
49	2005	Orlando	A New Freedom	
50	2006	Palm Harbor	The Sunlight Of The Spirit	Innisbrook
51	2007	Orlando	Things Will Come To Pass	Caribe Royale
52	2008	Ft. Lauderdale	Happy Joyous And Free	Marr Harbor Beach
53	2009	Jacksonville	...An Experience You Must Not Miss	Hyatt Regency
54	2010	Miami	Step into the Sunshine	Doral
55	2011	Orlando	As We Trudge The Road Of Happy Destiny	Doubletree Hotel
56	2012	Tarpon Springs		Innisbrook

**FSC LOCATIONS THROUGH 2012**

**FSC IN AREA 15 – SOUTH FLA**

37

**FSC IN AREA 14 – NORTH FLA**

19

**APPENDIX B – 39TH FSC NOTES**

Our initial contact with PGA National Resort & Spa was not only to inquire if they would be interested in hosting the 39th but if they would give us the same room rate as the 36th State Convention. They were agreeable to booking using the same room rates. On audio-visual throughout the resort, PGA allocated \$5.00 from each room reserved to offset the audio-visual requirements so there was no charge to our committee. As we had done previously, we made sure that all purchased services (coffee, meals, snacks, etc.) were quoted to us on a 'plus-plus' basis (i.e. - they included 6% Florida Sales Tax & an 18% service charge).

A very important issue was the subject of availability of sufficient chairs for attendees. In 1992, PGA really had no idea of their availability of chairs. They took an inventory for the first time and made up the shortfall by borrowing chairs from other facilities locally; they arranged for the transport in both directions. In 1995, there was no problem with chairs for attendees. Parking should be available for attendees. All parking at PGA is on site; they provided transportation from the cottages and from outlying facilities to the main facility. There was no charge for this service. Chairpersons of all the speakers meetings contacted the speakers and made arrangements to meet the speakers' planes and acted as their host/hostesses for the entire weekend. PGA allowed the Data Management Committee to set up their working area two (2) days before the opening of the convention to ensure the equipment was in good working order. The Data Management committee secured their working area nightly and retained the key in their possession.

The Convention Committee was offered the use of the Board Room at the resort for their nightly meetings at the conclusion of the main speakers meetings. The room was located midpoint between the Data Management room and the Registration area. This allowed the Treasurer use of the room to prepare deposits. The key to this room was retained by the Chairman of the convention. Additionally, periodic cash pickups from the Registration & Data Committee were coordinated so the latter could provide a printout for the Treasurer. This worked really well. We arranged with Barnett Bank for the loan of bank bags (at no cost) to be used for weekend deposits. Barnett Bank was located just three minutes from the main facility. Barnett also provided a key to their night depository at no cost. The unused bags and key were returned at the conclusion of the convention.

The signatures of either the coffee chairperson or the vice chairperson were required on all coffee orders. We made it clear up-front that we would not be responsible for any purchases not annotated as agreed upon. The Convention Chair was also authorized to sign the vouchers. On coffee cup size, we elected to use 6 oz. cups having profited with our previous experience of using 8 oz. cups; entirely too much wasted.

As is usual with all events of this magnitude, things 'pop-up' which no one thought of before. The few such instances which did occur were resolved to the satisfaction of Convention Committee and PGA National Resort & Spa.

Respectfully submitted, Roger P., Convention Chairman

## **APPENDIX C – 40TH FSC NOTES**

The 40th Florida State Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous as held July 24-28, 1996. Preparations for the convention actually began more than two years before that time when a bid committee was formed. The purpose of this committee was to negotiate a proposal for the Convention with a hotel (we chose the Bonaventure Resort & Spa in Ft Lauderdale, FL). The bid was then presented at the 1994 Florida State Convention and at that time we were awarded the bid., and Convention preparations were underway. The importance of the bid negotiations cannot be understated. The proposal which we received from the Bonaventure was actually a preliminary contract, and once we were awarded the bid there was very little negotiating that we could do. Unfortunately, we did not have some important information, which would have allowed us to negotiate a better contract. It is the purpose of this document to supply bid committees with some of the information which we believe would have been helpful for us. We hope you will benefit from our experience and we welcome inquiries about the details of our Convention.

Room Rate is one of the most important considerations. Most hotels are willing to give one free room for every 50 rooms sold. This is based on "room nights". In addition, many hotels are willing to provide one or more executive suites at no charge, for chairpersons.

Coffee is another very important negotiating item. Some hotels are willing to provide unlimited free coffee (regular and decaf) and tea just to get your business. Many hotels are no longer willing to do this, however. The Florida State Convention Advisory Committee strongly discourages the process of raising room rates in order to obtain free coffee. Some conventions in other parts of the country are actually selling "coffee cards" or coffee mugs (the purchase of which includes unlimited coffee). These are some of the ways conventions are using in order to pay for the high cost of coffee.

Audio Visual needs are an important item to be discussed before the bid is actually presented. Many hotels will want to charge for every microphone used. In addition, the cost of broadcasting sound and/or video of speaker meetings into overflow rooms, the lobby or hospitality suite(s) can be exorbitant. This should be negotiated in advance in order to avoid any unpleasant surprises. TV/VCR equipment is frequently used to show Conference Approved Video Tapes. Many hotels want a huge amount of money to provide this equipment for you. Or they may permit you to use your own equipment. It is another item which can be negotiated in advance. The Tennis Tournament and Golf Tournament should be negotiated in advance. It would be a really good idea to check the tournament prices of past conventions before agreeing. Banquet and Buffet prices are sometimes negotiated in advance. That way there are no unwelcome surprises. Remember that a service charge (approximately 18-22% or higher) is added to all meal events.

Determine if the hotel will permit you to bring in our own musicians for the various dances you may plan. Also, will they permit you to bring in our own Sound and Lighting for any entertainment you may decide upon? Make certain that the hotel has sufficient chairs to fill all of the meeting rooms you plan to use. If the hotel does not have enough chairs they may expect you to pay for their rental.

Discuss parking in advance. Most hotels do not have sufficient parking in the main hotel parking lot to accommodate all of the all of the convention attendees and overflow arrangements must be made. If the overflow parking lots are not close to the hotel they may be willing to incur the cost of vans to provide transportation back and forth to the parking lots. This

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should be discussed in advance so you will know whether the hotel is willing to pick up this expense.

We hope that the above information is helpful to you in your bid presentation. We wish you good luck in your negotiations and if we can be of help in the future we can be reached at the telephone numbers below.

Beth H. John S.

**APPENDIX D – 40TH FSC – TREASURER’S NOTES**

First, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs for selecting me as the Treasurer and giving me the opportunity to have the experience of working on the convention. It was a great experience that I hope I relive each year by attending future conventions! The initial financial decision that the committee needed to make was with regard to the tax exempt status. I have attached a Memorandum dated October 15, 1994 that summarizes the concept. I was very happy when the convention committee took a group conscience and decided to follow the tax law by filing the Form 1023 and becoming a 501(c)(3) organization. We also obtained the State of Florida Sales Tax Exemption which enabled us to save significant a amount of money.

We opened a bank account with a local community bank that would provide services free of service charges. Looking back, I think that the decision of a bank selection should be based in part on the location of a branch bank to the convention hotel. Recommend selecting a bank with a branch close to the hotel to minimize travel to & from the hotel with large amounts of cash.

The Executive Committee of the Convention made a proposed budget (see copy attached). It is a little deceiving as we did not budget income or expense for food (banquets) but the income & expenses are reflected in the actual numbers. With the exception of a couple of items we stayed within the budget as indicated in the budget vs. actual. The revenue was very favorable in that we budgeted for 2,500 attendees but we had 2,950 paid registrations.

Due to the tremendous support of the A.A.s throughout the state we had a very favorable revenues from the convention. After returning the \$2,500 seed money to the 41st Convention, we also provided \$2,500 in seed money to the 42nd Convention, and \$2,500 to the South Florida Area for the Florida Hospitality Room at the 2000 International Convention. \$500 was disbursed to the Florida State Convention Advisory Committee.

We also disbursed \$24,500 as follows:

General Service Office	\$14,700	60%
Broward Cty Intergroup	4,900	20%
Broward Cty Institutions Committee	4,900	20%

I would recommend that the Treasurer have some assistance with picking up cash during the convention as the deposit preparation and cash counting is a time consuming process.

Love and Service, Bob M.

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**APPENDIX E – BUDGET**

**53rd Florida State Convention**

<b>INCOME</b>			<b>Notes</b>
AA	2,060	\$ 61,800	<b>Total Registrations</b>
Al-Anon	135	\$ 4,050	<b>2,868</b>
Alateen	19	\$ 285	
Visitor	62	\$ 1,860	
Scholarships	592	\$ -	
Seed Money		\$ 3,000	From 51st Convention
Friday Night Buffet	401	\$ 12,030	
Saturday Night Banquet	858	\$ 30,030	
Golf Tournament	42	\$ 3,570	
Horseshoes	12	\$ 240	
Run/Walk	135	\$ 2,025	
Merchandise		\$ 13,641	Shirts, Cups, Bottles, Caps, Pins, Bags
Donations		\$ 1,534	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$ 134,065</b>	
 <b>EXPENSES \$ (104,735)</b>			
Accessibilities		\$ (362)	Hearing Impaired
Admin		\$ (246)	PO Box
Bank Fees		\$ (2,697)	Merchant Account Setup, Credit Card Fees
Decorations		\$ (2,312)	Friday Night Buffet, Saturday Night Banquet
Entertainment		\$ (1,244)	DJ, Bands, Bagpipes,
Golf		\$ (3,120)	Transportation, Golf Course Fees
Greeters		\$ (934)	Supplies
Horseshoes		\$ (77)	Sand, supplies
Hospitality		\$ (1,000)	Food for Hospitality Room
Hotel		\$ (51,225)	Banquet, Buffet, Coffee,
Literature		\$ (2,065)	Grapevine Room
Materials		\$ (5,292)	Printer, toner, Signage, Cards, Tickets
Merchandise		\$ (11,626)	Shirts, Cups, Bottles, Caps, Pins, Bags
Program		\$ (4,640)	Booklets
Registration		\$ (5,643)	Flyers, T-Shirts, Logo setup, Embroidery,
Sales Tax		\$ (931)	Florida State Sales Tax
Speakers		\$ (8,134)	Travel, gifts, registration, expenses
Supplies		\$ (889)	Stamps, Envelopes,
Travel		\$ (1,162)	Travel to Assemblies
Walk Run		\$ (429)	Signs, water, snacks
Website		\$ (707)	Website DBA, SSL Certificates
 <b>DISTRIBUTIONS \$ ( 29,331)</b>			
Al-Anon		\$ (4,335)	District 3 AFG
Intergroup		\$ (8,246)	Northeast Florida
55th FL State Conv		\$ (3,000)	Seed Money for Orlando
Florida Hospitality		\$ (2,000)	International in San Antonio
Southeast Hospitality		\$ (750)	International in San Antonio
State Advisory		\$ (4,000)	Contribution, CPA, Prudent Reserve
Area 14		\$ (2,500)	Contribution
Area 15		\$ (2,500)	Contribution
GSO \$		(2,000)	Contribution
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ (134,065)</b>	