

GCYPAA APPENDIX

Bidding Requirements

If you wish to host a GCYPAA in your area, read the following requirements. If you have any questions, please contact the Advisory Council or the current Host Committee.

1. Three AA members under 40 years of age with a minimum of one year of sobriety must represent the bidding city. Support by AA members of all ages is strongly encouraged.
2. Bidders must have commitments from at least two appropriate facilities (hotels, universities, convention centers, gymnasiums, etc.) so sized as to be able accommodate the entire conference. Please include the proposed dates and diagrams of the available meeting space. All costs, both to the committee and to the attendee, must be outlined.
3. Bidders must have available a temporary pre-registration flyer with a mailing address.
4. Whenever possible, provide that no large scale AA activity will be held in their city within a 30 day period before and a 30 day period after the conference date.
5. Statements of support from the DCM (District Committee Member) or intergroup secretary or regional counterpart must be brought to the bidding conference.
6. Prospective bidders will be required to demonstrate financial autonomy and responsibility within the traditions of AA as a whole, being directly involved in any activity from which funds are appreciated.
7. The new host city must agree that all proceeds after expenses are to be turned over to the Advisory Council for their disposition.
8. There will be a maximum limit of 30 minutes for the presentation by each bidding city.
9. Bidders must concisely state how hosting the Conference in their area will serve to carry the message of recovery to alcoholics in need, especially the young person in Georgia.
10. Conference theme must be taken from a direct quote from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Peach trademark should be incorporated into all conference paraphernalia.

The following is a suggestion by the Advisory Council and may be considered by the Bidding Committee: Experience has shown that the months of June, July and August are good months to host a Young People's Conference. The long holiday weekends have allowed extra time for the conference.

Cheat Sheet for Hotel Contracts

Over the last few years, a number of people have asked me about putting together a so called "cheat sheet" for obtaining a good contract with a hotel. I am no expert, so this is not the end all be all, however my service and professional experience working for the hotel side have taught me some hard lessons. So, with that, here are my suggestions. Please feel free to pass this on to any who could use it.

The hotel is a business; it and its employees deserve respect. They also do this all the time, so you are playing poker against a card shark, don't let your ego tell you that you are equal, that's like a newcomer telling you that they know more then you about staying sober, yet they have three days "again". Like elsewhere in our program, you get power buy admitting powerlessness.

Too many cooks will spoil the broth. Two is enough; three at the very most should go to meetings with hotel staff. One person should be designated as taking the lead, so that you look professional, rather than unified; they will see this as a weakness.

Your dress should be at the very least business casual. Smoking and profanity should be left outside the hotel door. Make sure you take notes, they will be. Don't commit to anything at the first meeting; let them understand you will go over everything carefully and that you will be back in touch.

Ask them for their hotel night count for the weekend you want to have the conference the previous year. This will allow you to know how full they really were. They have this, and although they don't want to give it to you, they will. The less the hotel was full that weekend last year, the more leverage you have on the room night cost.

Always start with the hotel at least 90 days ahead of time, better yet six months. Also, never let them know how many other hotels you are dealing with. And never put all your eggs in one basket.

Never take what they offer the first time. If they pull the "I have to check with my manager," say ok, commit to nothing, and ask for a meeting with the manager present the next time. You have the most weight to negotiate when the person with authority is in the room.

Never count on your salesperson being at the hotel when your conference happens; they get married, new jobs, promotions, etc. All the handshake agreements are out the window. Handshakes are for amateurs, not for contracts in sound business, as concept six talks about in our service manual. The Concept is clear: in order to reach your spiritual aim, you must be an effective business operation.

Meeting Space: Most hotels give you this on a sliding scale, based on your room nights, standard in the industry. They will show a charge per day for the cost of the space if you don't meet your block. The first thing that should be done is that these per day meeting space charges should become an entire weekend charge, not per day. They put it in there for novices; a professional meeting planner would never let it get by. They will give you the entire weekend charge without much of a fight.

Cut-Off Dates: All hotels have to have these, usually 30 days out; it's also standard in the industry. We all know of conferences where the hotel has rooms but won't give the conference rate after the cut-off date. I have recently used 80% rule in two different conference contracts. This is a clause put in the contract that agrees to the 30 day cut-off date like normal, but then adds that as long as the hotel is less than 80% full, they will honor the conference rate up to and including the conference. Also make sure the rate is good at least 3 days before and after.

Credit / Master Account: Too many conferences have called me a week before because their hotel has told them that they want all money up front as the contract calls for. We get ourselves in this trouble. The standard clause says that the committee must fill out a credit application 30 days before the conference. This helps nobody. There are two ways around this. One, tell them to run your credit now, so that you know before you sign the contract, what they will make you pay beforehand. Number two, and my favorite that hotels go for is a "worst case scenario" clause. This works like this: the committee agrees that if their credit is no good, they will pay the banquet charge and a deposit of \$2500 by Friday at 12 noon of the conference. This lets you know at least the worst it can be. You have the banquet money anyway by that time, and 2500, or lower for a smaller conference is usually easy to come up with.

Construction: Many hotels like to use conventions like ours as a good time to do renovations. Well again, we are not door mats. We deserve what the rest of the world gets. I have a clause added that if

major construction or renovation of the hotel is taking place during the conference, that the meeting space charge is waived regardless of room nights. I just had this added in a conference contract for a friend, and the hotel easily added it. Also, a clause for the pool should be in there. If the pool is closed any day of the weekend, the meeting room space is waived.

Air Conditioning: I know of at least three AA conferences where hotels have had AC failures over the weekend. Remember that while guests can get their own compensation from the hotel, we are responsible for the common areas and meeting spaces. Have them add a clause that should the AC fail, they will have extra water stations out, and that they will provide free ice tea as well.

Comp Rooms: The one comp (complimentary) room per 50 is common and standard in the industry. And regardless of what people say, very few hotels will give you a cash credit instead. I like to use this for either speaker or hospitality rooms. So in the contract make sure that the one or two suites you have for hospitality are charged the rate that guests to the conference receive. This will allow, if you get 50 rooms booked for the conference, at least one of your hospitality suites to be comped.

Signers: Make sure the contract states that only those people the committee designates in writing before the conference begins can sign for the committee. It should state that any charges signed by others will not be paid by the committee.

Microphones and Podiums: You should at least get one each for every room over the weekend.

DJ equipment: Have them state in the contract that the DJ can go in and out of the hotel on the loading dock with no cost or charge to the committee; same for the taper. Also, have them state in the contract the exact charge for an electrician if one is needed to connect power to the DJ. In a union hotel, you can really get hit hard. Agree to a price ahead of time, and try to get it for free in writing.

Coffee: In most big cities, you can't brew your own. Get a good discount, and try to get 500 - 1000 gallons as a condition of the contract. I suggest you use this at the end, as a deal breaker. Regardless, remember that a coffee set up at some hotels is also hot water, and is charged like coffee. Make sure you have in your contract that hot water for tea will be free.

Conference Manager: Tell the manager that you want to meet your conference manager ahead of time. Make sure you are comfortable with them. Many hotels have a number of them. Ask to meet 2 or three and pick the one you are most impressed with. The conference manager not the sales manager will make or destroy your weekend.

Dance ending times: I have seen conferences where the sales person told a committee one thing (like 2, 3, 4) and the Manager on duty wants to shut the dance down at 1. Put it in your contract; try to get as late as you can. I try and work them by trying to get at least one hour later on sat night then Friday. I have been at a conference where this happened, and the contract was shown to the manager on duty.

IMPORTANT NOTE: By the way, over the weekend, the hotel will not have a copy of your contract lying around. It's locked in the Monday - Friday sales office. So, make sure you have a copy with you at the conference that you can refer to and show to the operations staff over the weekend if you have too.

Liquor: AA has no opinion on outside issues, but we do make sure our members are safe. Have them put in the contract that no convention from the liquor industry will be in the hotel the same weekend. Also

have them state that no alcohol will be sold in public areas that your convention is in. This means hallways, not hotel bars.

Drunk Junk: Another outside issue, but it can be dealt with tactfully. I ask the hotel to promise that no meeting rooms or public areas will be leased to retail merchants of any type. This is generally the upstairs portion of the hotel and is not a part of the conference. Ask them to have a special lunch menu in their restaurants that are appealing to our members (i.e. low cost).

Outside of the contract it is a good to ask for the following to make the weekend easier for the attendees and the hotel staff:

- Have housekeeping out extra towels in each room, this will prevent calls to the front desk that will slow down service to us later on.
- Ask them to make sure the soda machines are filled the day before we arrive on all floors.
- Make sure before the weekend, you tip the staff. This will depend on if you're a small conference or large, but for the most part, we have a lot of young people who have never traveled before. They do not know that hotel employees depend on these tips for their living. Most important are the following, door staff, bell staff, and housekeeping. There is always a bell captain; you can see the door men, and an executive housekeeper. If these people are happy, you will have a much smoother running conference.

I can tell you that walking up to a doorman and saying the following, "Hi, I am ***** and I am with the convention. We have a lot of young people who don't know about tipping, so the committee wants you to have this, and we want to say thanks in advance."

A 20 to each doorman, maybe 100 to the bell Capt. to split up, and 100, to the housekeepers, will be worth their weight in gold. Make sure you get the doorman at night and day, and I suggest the hotel chair take care of this.

- At the end of the weekend, if you did ok, be kind and leave a little more for them, they are they working people key to your conference. You can expect them to work hard when they are working for free. Budget this in your conference budget, remember, it depends on the size of your conference. I think at NY ICYPAA we tipped a total of 500, and the staff worked incredibly hard for us.
- I have also seen conferences that have sent a few pizzas to the night staff for all their help. Remember, it won't be the gal or guy who signed your contract that makes your conference run smooth, it will be the person at the door or cleaning your room.

Parking: If the hotel says an outside agency runs parking, set up a meeting with their manager. Find out what they normally charge and work down from there.

Room Rates: When possible, you want the same rate for single, double, triple, and quad-sized rooms. Make sure you have bids from several hotels, and *never* let the hotels see in writing what you have from the other hotels. Always wait until the very end to ask for a lower rate. Never agree to a rate or contract

over the phone; face to face will pay off in spades. When you are at the final stage, and they want you to agree, tell them you need to speak to your committee or sleep on it.

Ok, that's the important stuff, other minor stuff is standard, but these are some time tested additions to hotel contracts. Also remember that just because a person is a lawyer does not make them a contract expert. If all you do is change numbers and don't add any language of your own to the contract, chances are that you're being taken down the novice highway by a skilled hotel salesperson that will have you sign, smile, shake hands, and then jump for joy when you leave because you sold the store for nothing.

There are two more important things. The first is any banquet type activity. *Never, ever, commit to an amount of people attending.* Even if you have to pay a few dollars more for the room cost, don't take this tempting apple from the hotel sales people. Commit to having a banquet and tell them you will give a number 72 hours out. This does two things: First, it prevents a major loss if people decide not to go to the banquet.

Second, and most important, it becomes the single biggest leverage you have with the hotel. As we all know, the closer we get to the actual dates, the more the hotel has you over so-called hot coals, and they know it. This is that strange period four weeks before a conference when the hotel finds all kinds of new charges to throw at you. This happened at a conference I will not name. The hotel wanted to charge \$2700 for a union electrician to be on duty the whole weekend because the taper being present required it under union rules. \$2700 to an AA conference can make or break it. Here's where the banquet came in handy. When you commit to 72 hours and a price, but not the number of plates, it gives you the choice to do the following: Tell the hotel you will only be ordering one banquet plate 72 hours out. This is totally contract cool, and the hotel people will freak. Last week we told them we had 350 sold, but that if they wanted to charge us \$2700 for an electrician, then they could send home their entire union catering staff as we would cancel the banquet. The hotel wound up eating all but \$250 of the electric cost, but understand, they did this because they want the banquet revenue. It's an awesome bargaining chip.

Also, due to 9/11, a new clause has become standard on the meeting planners side (the people who plan hotels for big companies with hotels, like our equal of the hotel chair). It is inserted under the cancellation section: "In the event of an un-foreseen act of terror that prevents or disrupts travel in the United States (air, train, bus, or private vehicle)"Insert name of conference" will not be held responsible for not meeting its contractual requirements with the hotel."

Host Committee Responsibilities

The following suggestions are from the Advisory Council and are to be considered by the new Host Committee. They are based on previous conference experience.

1. This conference does a greater job of carrying the message to young alcoholics when the conference planning committee is comprised of members 40 and under, with a minimum of one year's sobriety. This committee should be comprised of 15 to 21 members but no one should be excluded.
2. Many alcoholics travel great distances to hear and meet with other young alcoholics and to learn how the young alcoholic achieves sobriety. With this in mind, the council recommends an endeavor to obtain 75% of speakers in the 40 and under age group.

To comply with 7th tradition guides, the Council feels that speakers should receive registration, room accommodations and any other expenses deemed appropriate by the Host Committee.

3. Newly Added, May 2007 - In an effort to keep the conference affordable to all members of AA, especially the young person, the maximum conference pre-registration fee is \$15 (US) and onsite registration \$20 (US). Alterations to the registration cost may be adjusted with Advisory Council's approval.
4. At the conference, wherever the main registration is located or the center focal point, we urge that nothing but A.A. Conference Approved Literature be sold. Experience has shown that a "Flea Market" can develop and those unaware of our endeavor can be misled, especially by the press, radio and film. Keep the 12 Traditions in mind at all times.
5. Schedule the following meetings on your program: "How to Bid for GCYPAA" Q&A at 11:00 pm on Friday and a bid session at 9:00 am on Saturday. A room must be made available for use by the Advisory Council for its meetings throughout the weekend.
6. Before closing the conference, present the banner to the new Host City and invite the attendees to the next conference.
7. The Host Committee should be directly involved with any activity from which funds may be generated.
8. Save time for announcements by the Advisory Council at the end of the Saturday night meeting.
9. The Host Committee Treasurer is responsible to provide the Advisory Council Treasurer with monthly financial transactions reports and balance sheets. The Host Committee will have 90 days from the conclusion of its conference to forward a financial statement and bank statements and check registers to the GCYPAA Advisory Council Treasurer. It is the responsibility of the newly elected Advisory Council Members to ensure that these tasks are completed within a 90 day period. The Host Committee Treasurer will be prepared to sign the Federal Tax Return covering their conference activities upon request.