

## **SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING AREA MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES**

### **Preparing a bid to host an Area meeting / assembly**

#### FINDING A VENUE

Seek a meeting venue that includes hotel rooms or is close to hotels that can be used by members with easy access and can accommodate any accessibility needs such as elevators, ramps.

Area 26 has developed a Request for proposal (RFP) template to help approach and identify potential venues in your district that could accommodate our needs.

Consider that in the past Area 26 has held meetings in state parks, convention centers, hotels, and schools which may meet our requirements. Seek out suitable venues using the RFP template or similar in your district that may be used for any future meeting/assembly.

The RFP can help you develop and secure a proposal before bidding and a signed contract after being awarded the bid so that all parties are aware of their responsibilities.

Commitments for Room Nights or Food and Beverage purchase should be avoided. We have historically not kept good records on room night pick up which varies greatly depending on location. Closer to Louisville, the most populous city in Area 26, usually results in members staying at home and commuting to the event each day. Typically we request 20-30 rooms per night be blocked for as long as practical to allow people to reserve them before releasing to the public. Seek shared experience from Area Committee members.

#### VENUE REQUIREMENTS

Locate a facility that is willing to host us and meets our requirements:

Including Registration and Set up/clean up, we request to use the facility from about 7:00 AM Saturday morning through approximately 3:00 PM Sunday afternoon. Typically business is complete by 1:00 PM and many need to leave to travel home by that time, but a buffer is desirable for additional business and/or cleanup.

It is helpful to have access to set up on Friday evening but depending on the venue and their setup support this is not a requirement.

Venues should be checked for adequate heating and air conditioning, Wi-Fi signal to support the event, and reasonable space and comfort for participants.

The Main Room – should accommodate 150 – 200 people at tables. Attendance varies depending on location and agenda.

Requirements for set up in the main room include:

1. Two small tables available with power for the Treasurer and Registrar.
2. Head table (approx.16-18') with seating for four plus lectern and printer with power available to support.
3. Ten (10) standing committee tables should be available for displays in the main room or near registration.
4. Outside of main room but within proximity a Registration Area is required. This includes a table and chairs for volunteers who will sign in participants. This area is often the location for upcoming event flyers. Many host districts invite the local Central Office to offer A.A. literature for sale to participants.

Requirements for breakout rooms include:

Based on historical agendas the times are approximate and should be coordinated with the Area Chairperson.

Saturday from 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM

DCM Meeting – Seating for 35-50

Welcome to Service – Seating for 75-100

Note: The main room can be used for Welcome to Service if necessary

Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

1. Six (6) breakout rooms for committees for two sessions with seating for between 15-50 people.

Typical attendance requires approximately

4 meeting rooms to accommodate 15-20

1 meeting room to accommodate 20-30

1 meeting room to accommodate 35-50

Technology Requirements:

The Main Room and all breakout rooms must have power and 10 MB/second connection capability (connection speed of Wi-Fi)

If there is a limitation (captive portal) the venue should be able to offer wired internet such as Ethernet cable.

Projector Screen: A screen to project presentations and online participants will be needed in the Main Room. Find out if the facility has a screen that can be used for presentations as well as a small table for use with the projector, and notify the Area Chair. If this is not available, the Area will make arrangements.

Whiteboard: During an Election Assembly, a method of tallying votes is required. Find out if the facility has a large whiteboard or chalkboard that can be used in the main room for tallying votes, and notify the Area Chair. If these are not available, the Area will make arrangements.

### **Planning for Food and Beverage (F&B)**

Host districts may provide various F&B support depending on venue, budget, and availability. Attendees should be made aware of plans as early as possible so they can plan.

It is customary to provide coffee, tea, and water stations at the venue if possible.

Many hosting Districts provide fruit, snacks, or baked goods both Saturday and Sunday mornings prior to the start of the meeting.

Many hosting Districts provide lunch on Saturday and serve a snack on Sunday around noon depending upon availability and expected time for the agenda.

Area 26 has not typically taken a lunch break on Sunday to allow business to conclude as early as possible to allow travel home.

If serving lunch, the hosting District may select a person to say a brief, nondenominational prayer before we eat. If lunch is not being served on site, notify the Area Chairperson so that additional time can be added to the Agenda for off-site lunch.

### **Costs**

Based on Area 26 Financial Guidelines, the hosting District will be reimbursed for each Area Meeting/Assembly up to a total of \$1500 for rental of facility meeting space and coffee expenses. Host committees will maintain receipts and provide to the Area Treasurer for reimbursement.

Additional expenses are the responsibility of the hosting District. To offset these, some Districts place 7th Tradition baskets by the food or coffee and/or pass a basket at the Saturday night speaker meeting.

The Area has a Limited Liability Policy that most facilities accept.

### **Responsibilities When Awarded the Bid to Host**

Congratulations, hosting an Area Meeting provides Districts and Neighbor Districts a great opportunity to work together on an event. This is often followed by greater participation and enthusiasm among GSR's and Group Members.

Establish Event Committee - A.A. Service work requires a team of individuals for success. Upon returning to your district awarded the opportunity and responsibility to host an Area Meeting/Assembly, you should form a host committee. If multiple Districts are hosting together, DCM's should determine how to meet and work together and how to divide tasks. Experience suggests a secretary and treasurer are useful to help keep track of decisions made and finances.

Review responsibilities in these guidelines and work with the Area Chairperson to determine specific requirements. This may help you organize responsibilities for various tasks. It is recommended that you pass along experience and records to Area 26 and future host Districts so we can build a record of experience to help future host committees. Capturing attendance, room nights used, coffee consumption, meals, and other details will help refine our RFP process and give future districts better information to plan with.

Work closely with the Area Chairperson throughout the process and don't hesitate to reach out to DCMs that have recently hosted to gain their experience, strength and hope.

Finalize venue contract – as soon as possible lock in dates and details of contract or agreements with the host venue and hotels. There are many people with experience negotiating and if you have questions, contact the Area Chairperson or those with past experience hosting.

Create flyer so that paper copies can be made available at the next and subsequent Area Meetings/Assemblies. Provide the flyer to the Technology Committee for placement on the Area website in the preferred format if possible.

Chair DCM Meeting at Area - The host district DCM (choose one if co-hosted by multiple districts) is responsible for chairing the DCM Meeting on Saturday morning or when it is on the agenda. Coordinate with the Area Chairperson for the discussion topic unless there is a specific theme or agenda topic the host District would like to discuss. Experience suggests that DCM's are more engaged and prefer to attend a meeting with a specific topic in mind rather than a general session. Theme and Agenda topics from the most recent General Service Conference can provide some ideas.

Skit or Workshop for Area Meeting/Assembly – discuss with the Area Chairperson whether the agenda supports a skit or Workshop and what may be a useful topic for this session. If desired and possible to include, plan and prepare a Skit that is entertaining and educational OR a Workshop around a topic of interest to participants. The chosen topic should be determined and provided to the Area Chairperson at least 45 days prior to the event to be included on the Agenda.

A.A. Speaker Meeting - There is often an A.A. Speaker Meeting on Saturday night at the venue. The host district is responsible for choosing the speaker and chairing the meeting. Coffee and sometimes dessert are available. If there will not be a speaker meeting on Saturday night, the host district often provides directions to other local A.A. meetings members may choose to attend.

Registration – the host committee is responsible for manning the registration table from the time it opens to lunch on Saturday and opening to one hour after opening of session Sunday. This usually requires 2-3 volunteers to make sure attendees sign in at the correct notebook, issue name tags as needed, and provide helpful information about agenda and location of meeting rooms.

Setup Support – The hosting District is responsible for having the room set up by 8:30 AM Saturday morning. Saturday morning, or Friday evening (if available), the Area Chair will do a walk-through with the Host DCM to determine selection of the appropriate rooms and place the signs for the committee meetings. Host committee support should be available to assist with all non-technical aspects of setup. The Area Secretary is responsible for setup of the audio equipment in the main room. Committee Chairs are responsible for the audio/visual setup in their breakout rooms. Technology Committee support should also be available during this time.

Cleanup – The hosting District is responsible for cleaning up the space at the end of business on Sunday. Some venue contracts include clean up and moving tables or chairs. The agreement will determine what is required by host volunteers.

Receive Supplies –

Traveling Tote – Do not leave the Assembly/Meeting just prior to you hosting without the Traveling Tote. At the end of the quarterly Area Meeting just before hosting, the traveling totes of supplies will be passed on to the next hosting district. These supplies should include pens, markers, nametags, sign-in notebooks, and various other supplies. Sometimes cups and coffee supplies leftover are passed on to the next host district. Please check the totes to make sure you have everything you need and restock as needed. Provide receipts to treasurer as appropriate for supplies. Totes should include:

Four (4) Sign-in notebooks marked for “GSRs”, “DCMs”, “Area Officers/Committee Chairs” and “Visitors”

Name tags – 200 for each day

Committee Room signs - Inventory them when you receive and notify Chairperson if any are missing.

Outdoor Signs – in addition to the totes, there are yard sign type directional signs for outdoor placement that are passed on from one hosting district to the next. The signs should be in place by Friday evening and gathered up and given to the DCM of the next hosting District before they leave on Sunday.

Remember to “Pass It On” - Pass the totes on to the DCM of the next hosting District on Sunday.

Hospitality Room – Many host Districts provides a hospitality room at the host hotel on Friday afternoon and evening, Saturday morning, and/or Saturday night. Light snacks, soft drinks and coffee are often provided. Some host committees may choose to provide a light supper, such as soup or chili, on Friday night.

Maps should be available to help participants get from the hotel to the meeting venue if they are separate. People will be attending from all over Area 26 and may not be familiar with your location.

Friday Night Meeting – The hosting District sometimes holds an A.A. meeting at or near the meeting venue or hotel on Friday evenings. If offsite, having maps available in the hospitality room helps visitors find the meeting.