

QUARTERLY/ASSEMBLY PLANNING WORKBOOK

SOUTH FLORIDA AREA 15

BIDS & CONTRACTS

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FORMS AND LISTS ATTACHED:

- A) ASSEMBLY BID WORKSHEET
- B) SOUTH FLORIDA AREA ASSEMBLY BID FORM
- C) AREA 15 AGENDA
- D) ASSEMBLY ROOM REQUIREMENTS

1) BACKGROUND

This Bid Package was assembled to assist interested Districts in preparing bids for future Area 15 Quarterly/Assemblies including the Business Meetings.

The bidding for Assemblies takes place at the January Assembly Business Meeting every year for a one-year session consisting of 4 Quarterly/Assemblies starting in July of the current year through April of the following year.

In keeping with our Area 15 policy which gives all districts equal opportunity to host Assemblies, Districts that have hosted an Assembly in the previous 1 year session must wait to bid on a Quarterly/Assembly in the current bidding session until all other districts have had a chance to bid. After the first round of bids, any Assemblies remaining unhosted will be open to all districts for bidding. (CP661)

You can only bid to host one Quarterly/Assembly during the first round of bidding to give all Districts an opportunity to host. If an open date exists after the bidding is complete, you can bid on a second Assembly for your district.

It is always a good idea to have two or more dates ready so that if you do not win your first bid, you are able to bid on a second assembly. (CP282)

This bid packet is a compilation of the experience of past Assembly Chairs, Hotel Liaisons and Committee members with substantial bidding experience. These bidding requirements should be viewed as organizational ideas to help each district host the best possible Assembly.

When trying to secure a bid, contact hotels that best meet the needs of the South Florida Area 15 Assembly. Note this may or may not be within the boundaries of your district. Your district may have a Visitors Association or Chamber of Commerce that can assist you.

Every district that is planning to bid on a future Quarterly/Assembly is encouraged to have your Quarterly Chair and committee members attend the Quarterly Coordinators meetings regularly on Saturday at 3:00 pm at every Quarterly. We are there to share planning information with past Chairs, answer questions and to supply information and guidance for hosting your Quarterly/Assembly.

This packet discusses significant areas related to a successful Assembly bid. We hope this packet helps you to bring an Assembly to your district.

2) ASSEMBLY DATES

The Area 15 Quarterly/Assemblies are historically held during the months of January, April, July and October. The Area Quarterly Coordinator will put together a list of Black Out dates containing all significant national and religious holidays, State and International Conventions, GSO Conference and any other dates that would conflict with scheduling an Assembly.

3) HOTEL SELECTION AND ROOM RATES

The Host Hotel should have at least 200 rooms, and agree to a reasonable room block of 120 rooms on Friday night and 150 rooms on Saturday night. Generally, **it is better to be very conservative in any guarantee**, whether it is for room nights or food & beverage service. The reason is that it is easier to have the hotel add rooms or banquet meals than it is to try to reduce the guaranteed amount. The hotel usually wants a deposit for the contract about 6 months before the Assembly and for the banquets about 1 or 2 days before the banquet.

The reasonable rates for the hotel range from \$90 - \$130, plus tax and this rate should be available 3 days before and 3 days after the Assembly. When possible, try to get the same rate for single, double, triple and quad.

One complimentary 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 the speaker's room or hospitality rooms. Additionally, you should try to get at least one complimentary room for the Quarterly Chair and/or Hotel Liaison who need to be on site during the Assembly. The bidder should also obtain rates for single/double and triple/quad rooms at two overflow hotels.

The bidding District must make sure the hotel complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act, including Special Needs Accessible rooms for wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters. You may also need rooms with refrigerators for medical needs like insulin, etc. You should find out how many special needs rooms are available.

The hotel should agree to provide meeting breakout rooms holding anywhere from 20 – 75 people at no cost IF 80% - 90% of the room night block guarantee is met. The hotel must have sufficient space for tables for Registration, Recorder, State Convention, Literature and Grapevine displays.

The bidder must negotiate a locked room for the Archives that holds several tables for the display. Also try to have the hotel provide complimentary microphones or provide at cost.

All hotels have cutoff dates for the Assembly rate and they can be up to 30 days out. As such, we should try to negotiate the cutoff date to be as close to the Assembly weekend as possible. You should also try to negotiate a clause that states if the hotel is less than 80% full, they will honor the Assembly rate up to and including the Assembly.

The bidder can expect the hotel to seek a deposit of around \$3,000 for the banquets and anticipated food and beverage costs. This amount will be covered by the South Florida Area's contribution, banquet sales and the Seventh Tradition baskets passed for the hosting district. Make sure the contract states only one person can sign authorizations for charges to the hotel's Master Account on behalf of the district. It should specifically state that ***“any charge signed by anyone else will not be paid by the District.”*** 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.

4) BANQUETS, ICE CREAM SOCIALS, AND OTHER FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Historically, there is a Saturday night banquet in conjunction with the Saturday night meeting. This is a large source of income for the hotel and they will want to maximize their profits by the number of meals and the cost. Banquets should generally cost no more than \$35, ***including service and gratuities***, and should include a vegetarian option. The banquet ballroom should be large enough to seat 200 people for the banquet at tables and leave room for another 150 seats in the back of the ballroom for those who come to hear the speaker but do not attend the banquet. ***The banquet guarantee is an area where the number guaranteed is dangerous if the District does not sell the guaranteed amount of banquets.*** As such, you should negotiate a fixed, reasonable cost for the banquet, including tax and gratuity charges, and then keep the guarantee for number of meals as small as possible. You should also put the final count off as long as possible. They usually want the Banquet count 24 to 72 hours before the Banquet. Try to negotiate for a final count on Saturday afternoon of the Assembly, if possible. Explain to them that many people do not buy Banquet tickets until they arrive at the Assembly. The bidder should also try to negotiate that if the district meets 75% of the guaranteed banquet amount, that there will be no charge to the district.

The bidder could also try to negotiate the option for the district to bring food and coffee into the Hospitality Room.

Another consideration is whether the hotel is willing to set up a box lunch in the Lobby or other area to help meet demand at peak times. This is particularly helpful during the Assemblies in April and every other October during the Voting Assembly. If so, consider the costs of providing these services and if it is affordable.

5) COFFEE

HISTORICALLY, COFFEE IS THE LARGEST SINGLE EXPENSE OF A QUARTERLY. IF YOU PROVIDE ESSENTIALLY UNLIMITED COFFEE, YOU CAN EXPECT TO CONSUME AT LEAST 300 GALLONS AT WHATEVER PRICE COFFEE IS PROVIDED. Try to get a good discount and anywhere from 100 to 300 gallons (or unlimited) free during your negotiations.

To keep the coffee expense down, you should consider limiting the number of hours coffee is provided and you must specifically include a contract requirement that **coffee must be signed for by one committee member only**. There should be one person whose only function is to monitor and request coffee from the hotel. Another way to reduce coffee costs is to use small cups, no larger than 6 ounces, to reduce waste.

Please note that coffee set up at most hotels also includes hot water and it is charged as if it were coffee. Make sure your contract states that hot water for tea is FREE. You should also negotiate with the hotel to allow the district to make its own coffee in the Hospitality Room, thereby reducing the cost of the coffee service.

6) PARKING

If the hotel has a fee for parking, 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. Be sure to disclose any parking fees in your bid and at the bid selection meeting.

7) RESORT AND OTHER FEES

Try to negotiate away any resort or other fees. Make sure that any such fees are fully understood. If such fees are required, they must be disclosed in your bid and at the bid selection meeting. Surprise costs and higher fees create bad feelings.

8) ADHERENCE TO TRADITIONS

The Chair, CoChair, Hotel Liaison and Treasurer, at a minimum, should be familiar with the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and be committed to their observance, *particularly*;

The 5th Tradition of singleness of purpose in regard to the program, meeting topics and speakers;

The 6th Tradition requires that care should also be taken not to imply affiliation with any outside entity by using their corporate logos in Assembly materials;

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, we can take any offer that is made to all other outside groups.

Finally, 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. Inform the hotel staff concerning our traditions of anonymity and singleness of purpose to avoid unintended controversies. It is suggested that the Assembly be listed by the hotel as “South Florida Area General Service Quarterly.”

GSO publishes “AA Guidelines for Conferences, Conventions and Roundups” that can be downloaded from the www.aa.org website. 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 Assemblies and gatherings. 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 Quarterly Bid Coordinator position was set up to provide an accessible source of past Assembly experience. This person and past Quarterly Chairs are willing to share what they have learned with you if you ask.

9) SUGGESTIONS FOR BIDDING

The AA service structure can provide valuable assistance because it disseminates AA information to districts in the area and may provide a resource on AA Traditions. Statements of support from your district are part of the bid package.

Other suggestions include:

1. Organize bid material and be ready to answer questions.
2. Know the exact costs of hotel rooms, banquet, coffee, etc.
3. Wear business attire when presenting the bid.
4. Adopt and maintain a positive attitude and enthusiasm

10) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT BID SELECTION

What are the dates the hotel is available for the Assembly?

What is the room rate?

How many days prior and after the Assembly is the room rate extended?

How many complimentary gallons of coffee are provided?

What is the price per gallon of coffee?

Can you make or buy your own coffee but have hotel provide the servers?

What is the cost of the Banquet?

What are the Banquet selections?

What is the cancellation/refund policy for hotel reservations?

Does the hotel have designated smoking areas?

As per Area 15 Current Practices, each District wishing to host an Assembly must email their bids to the October Area 15 Quarterly Coordinators Meeting for review.