

Guidelines for the Colorado Area Convention

Colorado A.A. convention guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members within Colorado. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference. In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the conscience of the Area 10 Assembly. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience and to establish continuity and clarity in the undertaking of an A.A. Convention in Area 10.

Why Have a Convention?

The annual convention provides many unique vehicles for promoting the primary purpose of A.A.: carrying the A.A. message to those who still suffer. Exposure to speakers from different parts of the country, continuous meetings, meetings on the Steps and Traditions, and the convivial atmosphere surrounding the whole weekend, carry the A.A. message in ways that the groups, by themselves, would find extremely difficult or impossible to achieve. It is clear after long discussion within the Area 10 Assembly that the Area as a whole supports and is in favor of an annual convention. Fellowship, laughter, warmth and understanding; are among the many reasons that the annual convention is desired in Area 10. Many a member of A.A. has attended year after year that they may “create the fellowship they crave”ⁱⁱ.

The Convention Steering Committee

This steering committee will be under the auspices of the Convention Committee and will be for the purpose of continuing the informed conscience of the Area 10 assembly with reference to conventions and “that the valuable experience of convention planning can be carried over from one year to the next”ⁱⁱⁱ. The committee will select appropriate meeting times and places, as it deems necessary; however, in no event shall it meet less than once a year. The spiritual intent is to provide consistent guidance for the convention committee and future conventions.

The initial committee shall consist of a past area convention chairperson, serving in the stead of the most immediate past chair who was unable to fulfill the commitment, the current convention chair, the remaining convention chairs as appointed by the Area Committee (at this writing the Assembly is awarding bids two (2) years out from the current convention year), the immediate past treasurer, one past delegate, and one “at large” member. The initial rotation shall be (2002-October) the past treasurer, the 2002 convention chair, and the immediate past delegate after November 30, 2002. In October 2003, the at-large member shall rotate, along with the 2002 convention chair and treasurer. They will be replaced by 1) at-large member appointed by the Area Chairperson, 2) the 2003 convention chair and treasurer. This rotation may be amended from time to time as required. All unfilled slots are to be appointed by the Area Chairperson. Members unable to serve should be replaced by persons who have the particular qualifications (i.e. past delegate, convention chair, or treasurer, etc.) necessary to fill the job.

The Convention Committee

Once the Area Convention Chairperson is selected it is suggested that convention committee is formed for purposes planning and execution in the following areas.

1. Chairperson – assisted by a co-chair person oversees the entire convention; coordinates the work of the subcommittee chairperson; keeps informed on the progress of all arrangements; calls and chairs committee meetings. It is suggested that the upcoming committee begin meeting in October following the most recent convention. The Chairperson is normally responsible and accountable for arranging taping of the convention. Experience has taught us that following the A.A. Guidelines for taping Conferences and Conventions should be followed as closely as possible. Chairperson expenses normally fall in the category of Operating Committee Expenses/Budget for reporting.

2. Secretary – keeps all written records, including minutes of committee meetings; also sends out notices of committee meetings and other mailings to committee members. Secretary expenses fall in the category of Operating Committee Expenses/Budget for reporting.

3. Treasurer – is responsible for all money, including revenues from registration and banquet tickets; pays all bills; usually advises the chairperson on cash supply and income flow as well as rate of expenditures.

(Experience indicates that it is best if the treasurer is a person with four or more years' sobriety and some solid business and/or bookkeeping experience. Experience with and access to basic spreadsheet software is most recommended. Each check usually calls for two signatures.)

It is strongly suggested that the reporting format be used as shown in Exhibit "A". This format utilizes no more than 12 accounts for purposes of reporting income. Also no more than 15 accounts for reporting expenses. It is suggested that the format include a method to account for gross and net income and expenses. This total should tie to the check book balance. This reporting format is required in order to provide useful and comparative financial information from year to year. This will assist in subsequent conventions planning and budgeting and insure uniform reporting to assist the area treasurer with the annual tax returns.

Donations to the registration fund, scholarships extended to members, 7th tradition contributions, should be tracked for purposes of reporting to the assembly.

A re-cap sheet as shown in Exhibit "B" can be used to report the basic attendance at the convention. It is suggested that this guideline be used whenever possible.

Treasurer expenses fall under the category of Operating Committee Expense/Budget for reporting.

Alanon Family Group ("AFG") registrations, luncheon ticket sales i.e. income, costs for speakers travel, meals and/or other expenses, should be strictly accounted for. Any overage

or loss from the net result of AFG activities should be reconciled with AFG.

Ultimately the treasurer should be able to provide a detailed historic accounting of all financial activities of the convention with the ability to pass this information on in a meaningful manner.

4. Programs Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person is generally responsible for the convention theme along with the rest of the convention committee. This person coordinates closely with logistics and workshops to prepare the convention program ensuring that no overlap occurs. The cost to prepare and print the program is normally included in this budget/expense for reporting.

5. Logistics Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person coordinates closely with programs and workshops. Scheduling of room use and coordination of meeting and program start and stop times is essential. This person arranges for and provides translation equipment and sign language interpreters. Normally costs for interpreter travel, translation equipment, audio-visual expense and overflow room expense is included in this budget/expense for reporting. Normally the actual hotel lease cost is included in this budget/expense for reporting.

6. Registration Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. The registration chair is responsible for providing a mailing list of those registered participants from the current year that want to be contacted via U.S. Mail for the following years event. This person also coordinates and oversees set up of registration tables at those A.A. events leading up to the actual convention within the area for one year prior to the actual convention. The registration chair coordinates closely with the Public Information chair in getting the word out about the upcoming convention.

NOTE- databases set up to hold name and address listing information for purposes of soliciting convention flyers and mailings are NOT to be shared with any other party or convention, or AA entity, EXCEPT, under certain circumstances and at the request of the Area Committee, with the Area 10 Records Coordinator.

7. Entertainment Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. The entertainment chairperson will arrange for the convention dances and traditions play if there is one. This person is responsible for arranging for lighting and sound for the band and normally has those expenses included in this budget/expense.

8. Hospitality / Solutions Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person serves as the convention host. This person arranges for a committee to provide hosts to greet the conventioners and are identified by wearing a special badge. A room is often provided by this committee specifically manned for the purpose of providing answers, and “solutions” to any problems the attendees might have while at the convention.

9. Display Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes.

This person is responsible for displays and posters that direct the conventioners where to go during the convention. This person coordinates closely with the logistics, programs and workshops chair in order to provide the clearest possible message to conventioners.

10. Literature / Video Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person is responsible for having A.A. approved literature available for all. G.S.O. provides a literature display to all conferences and conventions. In addition this person is responsible for arranging and purchasing videos for entertainment purposes only along with approval of the convention committee. Coordination with the local inter-group is essential to avoid duplication of efforts.

11. Host Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person is responsible for arranging for the travel of speakers, and for a host/hostess picking the speaker up at the airport and arranging for proper accommodations while the speaker is in town. Travel arrangements must be worked out well in advance and it must be clear that all expenses will be paid for the speaker only. It is the conscience of Area 10 that the spouse or significant other of the invited speaker is welcome to attend at his/her own expense. If the AA speaker's spouse or significant other is also the invited AFG guest speaker, then AFG is responsible for their speakers' expenses if any. Normally speakers are provided a per-diem amount for meals while here for the convention. This per-diem amount is based on the going rate for meals during the time the speaker is in town. Once again this per-diem amount is for the speaker only. Speaker appreciation gifts, speaker travel, speaker hotel and meal accommodations are normally part of the host budget/expense for reporting.

12. Coffee Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person is responsible for negotiating the coffee costs and arranging for the sale of coffee at the convention. This person must coordinate closely with logistics to establish locations for coffee sales. Income from coffee sales must be tracked carefully and reconciled with the figures reported by the treasurer.

13. Public Information Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person has the sensitive task of encouraging a large attendance without abandoning A.A.'s principle of "attraction rather than promotion". Publicity efforts can be kept within the dignity and spirit of A.A. through the following means^{iv}:

a. Preparation and distribution of material about the program, speakers, and time and location of the convention (perhaps including a map of the area, if necessary). It is advisable for the convention committee to rent a post office box and use that on all mailings, with no reference to A.A. on return addresses. The convention publicity material should also be sent to the press, radio and TV outlets in the immediate area. (The Public Information Workbook, available from G.S.O., gives useful advice on approaching the media.)

b. Regular fliers about the convention are usually mailed monthly to all groups in the area, with the first mailing beginning as soon after the most current convention as possible.

c. Dates and location of the convention, with mailing address for information or registration, should be sent (three months in advance) to the A.A. Grapevine and to *Box 4-5-9*, to be published in their calendars. The GV lists only area, regional, state, or provincial events of more than one day's duration; send notices to Box 1980, New York, NY 10163. For *Box 4-5-9*, send notices to Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

The P I chairperson coordinates closely with the registrations chairperson to arrange for fliers that will be mailed to the current years attendees at their request for the upcoming convention. Close coordination with the local and outlying inter-groups is essential to the success of the convention. The expense for printing fliers, public service announcements and other types of information distribution are normally part of the public information budget/expense for reporting.

14. Workshops Chairperson – has his/her own budget and expense account for reporting purposes. This person is responsible for arranging workshops and panels outside of the realm of speakers. There are numerous suggestions for panels and topics for workshops including utilization of current and past delegates, committee people, trustees and regional committee members to name a few. It is highly suggested that topics for panels and workshops be taken directly from the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. A useful tool for arranging panels and workshops is the experience of the Area 10 Convention Steering Committee and the A.A. Guidelines for Conferences and Conventions. It is understood that the member of Alcoholics Anonymous humbly chosen to present their experience on a panel or in a workshop is doing so in service of A.A. and is not to be reimbursed for their expenses.

15. Convention Website Chair – (only required if the convention elects to maintain their own website – not necessary if all publicity is managed through the www.coloradoaa.org website) this person will be responsible for setting up and maintaining the website associated with the Colorado Area Convention. They will have budget and expense associated with hosting and maintaining the Convention website. Guidelines for the Convention Website are outlined elsewhere in these Colorado Area Convention Guidelines. No content will be added to this site without the expressed approval of the Convention Chair. As much as possible, the Convention website should be consistent with the look and feel of the Area 10 website. The Convention Website Chair shall coordinate with the Area 10 Website Chair so that links to the Colorado Area Convention website from the Area 10 Website work properly.

The Convention Website chair will also be responsible for disabling the website or passing the website maintenance over to the next year's committee if they elect to have a web presence.

Should registrations be accepted online, the Convention Website Chair will need to coordinate with the Registration Committee and the Treasurer to ensure that the registration process protects members' identities and is responsible financially.

A.A. and the Role and Relation of Alanon Family Groups

Alanon Family Groups (AFG) traditionally participate in A.A. Conventions as invited guests. AFG may hold concurrent event(s) with the A.A. Area Convention. In all cases, such activities are carefully coordinated with the Convention Committee. AFG should provide a committee chairperson, or contact that will attend and participate in pre-convention planning and activities. Traditionally, and as part of the convention program AFG enjoys hosting the Saturday Luncheon with a key speaker address at that time. Also, an AFG speaker is traditionally included on the Saturday evening program, before the A.A. speaker. Income and costs for Registrations of AFG and tickets purchased for those activities should be strictly accounted for (see exhibit "A"). Any overage or loss in funds resulting from the luncheon will be reconciled with AFG. Once again this "Luncheon" is a paid event and the "7th Tradition" basket should not be passed at this event. AFG will normally request an area specifically for its own use, costs for the use of this area should be broken out. Costs for AFG speakers should be accounted for (see Treasurer section). As the host of the convention every convenience and cooperation should be extended to Alanon Family Groups.

Area 10 Convention Website Guidelines

A state convention may wish to have a web site to share convention information and to possibly provide for online registration. If they chose to not have online registration, advertisement of the convention flyer and any information about the convention program could be published via the Area 10 Website Chair on www.coloradoaa.org.

If the committee does chose to have a separate web site and/or allow registration online, it should do so in strict accordance with these guidelines. It is likely that experience can be built from previous convention committees such that the basic design and web structure used from previous conventions can be adapted and evolved rather than each committee creating their own web site

This website must be established and maintained in strict accordance with the Area 10 Website Guidelines and Website guidelines published by GSO.

In particular, the following principles should apply:

1. There will be no links to any website other than to the Area 10 Website (www.coloradoaa.org) on the Convention Website. This includes having no links to other conventions or commercial enterprises associated with the convention (e.g. tapers, vendors, local establishments, etc.)
 - a. The only possible exception would be to link to the hotel or hotels affiliated with or hosting the convention. Should such a link be provided, it should be made VERY obvious that the person is leaving the Colorado Area 10 Convention website.
2. The website may or may not be hosted by the same website hosting company as the Area 10 website. However, the website must not interfere with the Area 10 website and must be maintained by someone who is responsible to the convention committee.

3. All content on the convention website is the responsibility of the Convention Chair and, ultimately, (as with www.coloradoaa.org) the Area 10 Chair.
4. To avoid confusion, the website for a particular convention will not be active until after the previous year's convention is complete.
5. As soon as the convention is over, the website will be changed to the next year's convention information or disabled if the next year's convention chooses not to have a website.
6. In accordance with GSO and Area 10 web guidelines, the site must be hosted by a reliable commercial hosting service – not on a member's private computer or on a site where “free” hosting is offered in exchange for advertising.

If a convention committee decides to take registrations from members online, the following additional principles apply:

1. Care must be taken to protect the information of any registrant. The registration data must be available only to the convention registration committee and treasurer.
2. As outlined under the duties of the convention Registration Chair, the only purpose for registration data is to be used for identification at the convention and for mailings pertaining to the subsequent years' convention. This should be clearly stated on the online registration form and registrants should be provided the opportunity to opt out of receiving subsequent convention mailings, if so desired.
3. If credit card information is accepted for online registration payment, the individual credit card information should NOT be collected or stored on the convention website or in the registration database. The vendor selected to process payment should also not be given personal information about the member apart from that necessary to prevent fraud.
4. Care must be taken to protect both the convention treasury and the Area 10 treasury and accounts from potential security breaches or unauthorized charges or charge-backs.

Miscellaneous Tips on Good Convention Management and Presentation

Activities:

An excellent activity is the good old fashioned “Meet and Greet” sometimes held on Friday night of the convention. Activities for which A.A. is not licensed such as raffles should be avoided. Activities that generate inordinate amounts of publicity, and costs, such as a golf tournament should also be left to a more appropriate setting. The Area 10 Convention Steering Committee can provide excellent experience in deciding which activities lend themselves to a successful A.A. Convention.

Money:

A word about money. It is the intent of these guidelines to help direct answers to questions about money. For clarification this is a paid A.A. event. It is not customary to allow nonregistered attendees' admission to events for which they are not duly registered. 7th Tradition

money collected at the continuous meetings, if any, are considered to be supporting the “temporary group” holding those meetings and should be collected as rent from the “temporary group” and deposited along with the other types of income.

i Pamphlet A.A. Guidelines for Conferences and Conventions 5M-4/96 MG-4 pg. 1, par. 2

ii A.A. Big Book pg. 164

iii Pamphlet A.A. Guidelines for Conferences and Conventions 5M-4/96 MG-4 pg. 2, par. 1

iv Pamphlet A.A. Guidelines for Conferences and Conventions 5M-4/96 MG-4 pg. 2, par. 8

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