

CONVENTION GUIDELINES

THE TWELVE STEPS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.*
4. *We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
11. *We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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CONVENTION GUIDELINES

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Part One

General Planning
Convention Committee
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and Answers

GENERAL PLANNING

PURPOSE

Conventions are held by members of Narcotics Anonymous to bring our membership together in the celebration of recovery. Meetings, workshops and other activities are scheduled to encourage unity and fellowship among our members.

Because conventions are sponsored by service committees of Narcotics Anonymous, they should always conform to the N.A. principles and reflect our primary purpose.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Hosting a convention is a tremendous responsibility which requires significant planning, dedication and effort. Conventions can be complex and overpowering endeavors; therefore, effort should be made to select key people who have had prior convention experience. The planning of a convention requires the combined efforts of many people. These people work as a committee which might be made up of representatives from groups sponsoring the convention. If the convention is conducted as an area, regional or world activity, the committee should be organized as a subcommittee of the ASC, RSC or WSC. In areas and regions where annual conventions are held, the committee is oftentimes a standing committee of the ASC or RSC. This is done to ensure continuity of effort. Although some members change from year to year, enough experienced convention planners usually remain to ensure an effective planning process.

TYPES OF CONVENTIONS

World Convention
Combined States Convention
Regional/State Convention
Area Convention

WORLD CONVENTION: The first WCNA was held in La Mirada, California in 1971. The convention has been

held annually since that date. Presently, it is a four-day celebration occurring over Labor Day weekend, which generates participation of the entire global N.A. Fellowship.

COMBINED STATES CONVENTION: Traditionally, these conventions involve several regions or states who combine efforts and resources to celebrate recovery.

REGIONAL CONVENTION: Generally initiated at the regional service committee level, a regional convention is designed to encourage unity and celebration within a particular region.

AREA CONVENTION: These conventions are sponsored by an area service committee and foster unity and the celebration of recovery in a specific area. Area conventions are rare because the effort and resources required to stage a convention are often greater than those which are available at the area level.

BID COMMITTEE

When bidding for convention sites is appropriate, an ad-hoc committee should be formed to prepare a bid. This committee should be aware of the bidding criteria, presentation requirements and formats that are required. At the previous year's convention, the Bid Committee makes a presentation. Once the convention has been awarded or authorized, the next step is organizing a full Convention Committee. The Convention Committee is charged with the responsibility of organizing and carrying out the convention in its entirety and being responsible to those they serve.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All Convention Committee meetings should take place at a regularly scheduled time and place and follow the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order. The purpose of these meetings is to gather and share information regarding the planning and carrying out of the convention. Effort should be made to encourage support and participation from all members. Care

should also be exercised during the planning process to involve as many groups and individuals as possible. Even at this early stage, it is necessary to elect a chairperson to preside over Convention Committee meetings and activities. Election of officers should be based upon qualifications and experience. A description of Executive Committee members and duties is presented in these guidelines.

Voting privileges are extended to each member of the Convention Committee. Any member who holds an office or participates on a regular basis at the Convention Committee meetings is considered a member. Subcommittee voting privileges are determined by the chairperson of the subcommittee. All subcommittees hold separate meetings prior to Convention Committee meetings. The subcommittee chairpersons submit reports, recommendations and other details about their areas of responsibility.

Convention Committee meetings are scheduled monthly until four months prior to the convention, at which time they take place every two weeks. At two months prior to the convention, meetings take place weekly. It is advisable to schedule two or three hours to conduct Convention Committee meeting business. An agenda or format should be prepared prior to meetings. Many Convention Committees use the agenda shown below:

1. Opening: Begin with a moment of silence asking for all members to reflect on their involvement, thinking about who they serve and why. Follow with the Serenity Prayer and the Twelve Traditions.
2. Read and approve the minutes of the last meeting.
3. Chairperson's report (review progress to date and relay recent information).
4. Treasurer's report (update on expenses and new balance).
5. Subcommittees' reports (reports include goals and progress of each committee).
6. Old business carried over from the last meeting.
7. New business to be undertaken before the next meeting.
8. Closing prayer.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

The Convention Committee is generally made up of members who were involved in the preliminary planning and bidding process. However, membership in the Convention Committee should be open to all members of the Fellowship. The Convention Committee consists of an Executive Committee, subcommittee chairpersons and attending members.

The Executive Committee and subcommittee chair positions are identified as follows:

- A. Executive Committee**
 - 1. Chairperson
 - 2. Vice-Chairperson
 - 3. Secretary
 - 4. Treasurer
- B. Subcommittee Chairpersons**
 - 1. Hotels and Hospitality
 - 2. Fund-Raising (entertainment)
 - 3. Public Information (institutional)
 - 4. Registrations
 - 5. Arts and Graphics
 - 6. Program
 - 7. Merchandising

Requirements and qualifications suggested for the Executive Committee and subcommittee chairpersons of world conventions are as follows: (Adjustments can be made for regional/state conventions on clean time requirements).

- 1. Chairperson five years clean time
- Vice-Chairperson four years clean time
- Secretary two years clean time
- Treasurer five years clean time
- Subcommittee Chairs two years clean time
- 2. Working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of N.A.

3. Willingness to give the time and resources necessary
4. Ability to exercise patience and tolerance
5. Active participation in Narcotics Anonymous.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee carries out (executes) the conscience of the overall committee. It functions as the administrative committee of the convention and holds separate, periodic and special subcommittee meetings. Its function is to ensure that the various subcommittees work together and to assist subcommittees which may need extra help.

However, it is not necessary for the Executive Committee to involve itself directly in the specific workings of each subcommittee. The members of the Executive Committee discuss the performance of subcommittees as well as the convention budget and other matters which affect the convention. The results of these discussions are included in reports at Convention Committee meetings.

As soon as possible, the Executive Committee drafts a schedule of meeting dates for the Convention Committee. This schedule is then approved by the Convention Committee and distributed to all members. It is advisable to choose a particular night on which meetings will be held and schedule all meetings on that night throughout the duration of the planning period.

The Executive Committee also makes regular reports to the service committee sponsoring the convention. For example, the World Convention Corporation for Narcotics Anonymous oversees the world conventions, and reports to the WSC. Reporting to the regional service committee or area service committee would be appropriate for regional or area conventions. Comments and suggestions from the sponsoring service committee are included in the chairperson's report at the beginning of each committee meeting.

The responsibilities and qualifications of the Executive Committee are as follows:

CHAIRPERSON: Five years clean time, demonstrated stability in local community, and administrative abilities.

1. Organizes subcommittees and delegates major tasks to specific subcommittees. Stays informed of the activities of each subcommittee, and provides help when needed.
2. Helps resolve personality conflicts.
3. Keeps activities within the principles of the Twelve Traditions and in accord with the purpose of the convention.
4. Monitors the fund flow and overall convention costs, and helps organize the subcommittee budgets. Prepares a budget for the Executive Committee functions.
5. Prevents important questions from being decided prematurely, in order to foster understanding by the entire committee prior to action.
6. Allows the subcommittees to do their jobs while providing guidance and support. Only major issues need be brought to the Convention Committee meeting. Subcommittees should be given trust and encouragement to use their own judgment.
7. Prepares the agenda for Convention Committee meetings and Executive Committee meetings.
8. Votes only to break a tie.
9. Chairs the Convention Committee meeting as well as the convention.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Personable and familiar with all committee members, in order to serve as a liaison between the subcommittees and the hosting community.

1. Acts as chairperson if the chairperson is unavailable.
2. Coordinates subcommittees and attends subcommittee meetings, in order to ensure that they get the necessary support to do a good job.
3. Works closely with the chairperson to help delegate responsibilities to subcommittee chairpersons.
4. Makes a report to the hosting service committee on the progress of convention planning.

SECRETARY: Service experience and good typing skills, as well as service experience to ensure that accurate minutes are distributed to the committee members.

1. Keeps minutes of all committee meetings and subcommittee reports.
2. Mails minutes to committee members after approval by the Executive Committee Chairperson. Minutes are mailed out within ten days after the Convention Committee meeting. An agenda for the next meeting can be attached to the minutes if it will help the committee function.
3. Maintains a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of committee members for committee use.
4. Keeps extra sets of minutes, updated after each committee meeting, for members who request a complete set.
5. Communicates to the local N.A. membership regarding the progress and planning of the convention. Assists all committees in mailing and correspondence.

TREASURER: Five years clean time, demonstrated stability in the local community, accounting skills, service experience with conventions or other large scale Fellowship activities, and accessibility to other committee members, especially the Registration Subcommittee.

1. Opens a bank account for the Convention Committee. Usually the signatures required for the account are any two of four signators which are the Convention Committee Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The cards and account information are filled out at the committee meeting.
2. Works with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson to prepare a budget for the convention which is used for planning fund-raising activities. The budget is based on the subcommittees' recommendations as to the monies they will need to carry out their tasks. The budget can be a

rough estimate at the beginning of the planning, and revised as the convention draws near. When all of the financial needs of the subcommittees are listed and totaled, the income should be outlined: one source of income comes from fund-raisers, and the second from registrations.

3. Writes all checks and is responsible for collecting receipts from subcommittees for money paid out.
4. Responsible for all monies, including revenues from registration and banquet tickets; pays all bills; and advises the chairperson on cash supply, income flow and rate of expenditures.
5. Reviews subcommittee reports for departures from the financial plan not mentioned in the original budget so that an accurate budget can be maintained. This information is included in the Treasurer's report.
6. Each check should require two signatures. Additionally, a complete treasurer's report within three months of the convention should be submitted to the sponsoring service committee along with fund distribution. Many convention committees also have the report audited as a further safeguard of convention funds.
7. A periodic review of all financial records should be made by the corresponding service arm. The records should be reviewed at the time of the actual funds distribution in accordance with the Treasurer's financial statement requirements.

Helpful Hints for Treasurers

1. Have an accountant check your work.
2. Save all receipts in case you get audited by the IRS.
3. The Convention Committee Treasurer is the only one to handle checks.
4. Determine budgets for subcommittees as early as possible.
5. Maintain a separate account or record of monies received for banquet, brunch and registrations.
6. Utilize the WSC approved financial guidelines whenever possible.

Helpful Hints for Budgets

The importance of making a budget for the Convention Committee and subcommittees needs to be emphasized. At this stage of planning, the committee should list as many financial responsibilities as possible. Most of the subcommittees, with the exception of the Fund-Raising Committee and the Hotels and Hospitality Committee, should write a budget and adhere to it fairly closely throughout the planning period.

The Arts and Graphics Committee projects a monetary figure for flyers, programs, banner(s), literature, and other displays and graphics that will be used at the convention. The Program, Public Information and Registrations Committees estimate the cost of mailing, paper, envelopes, and other office supplies needed to carry out their duties. The Fund-Raising Committee sets a budget based on the entertainment which will be used at the convention. This committee also sets a new budget each month which includes the expenses of functions the other committees perform on their behalf, such as designing flyers, or mailing. For the sake of expediency, the Fund-Raising Committee maintains a petty cash fund to aid in its operations. The Hotels and Hospitality Committee projects attendance figures before setting a budget. This is the most difficult area to budget because we can never really be sure of attendance until a few weeks prior to the convention. A reasonable projection of participation is a figure between 40 percent and 60 percent above the pre-registrations, depending on the efficiency of Fellowship communications. With regard to banquet tickets, prudence and caution should be used when estimating the number of tickets because this is one important area where a committee can fall into the red.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Nominated or appointed from Convention Committee members, the subcommittee chairpersons should have general qualifications as outlined in the qualification section listed above. Specific service or vocational experience should be considered prior to

election or appointment. It should be clearly understood that the subcommittees have specific service responsibilities to perform.

Subcommittees are vital to the convention, and individuals should expect to be replaced if they are unable to serve for any reason. Naturally, relapse necessitates replacement; this is because we are as concerned for the member as we are for the service responsibility. Each subcommittee has only one chairperson who then recruits committee members. A list of committees is provided in this manual, although other committees may be established if needed. Experience has shown, however, that most other responsibilities can be incorporated within the framework provided.

Subcommittee meetings operate according to Robert's Rules of Order. This ensures that the meetings run smoothly and that business is conducted in an orderly fashion. Each subcommittee chairperson should be aware of what responsibility each member has assumed, and make sure that every task assigned is carried out.

Subcommittees maintain accurate records of the activities of the committee as well as all correspondence. Financial reports, including needs, expenditures, and receipts are included with each subcommittee report. The subcommittees of the Convention Committee work together. At the onset, each subcommittee should decide whether or not it will use the services of another committee, or address that particular area of business itself. Although either way is effective, remember, cooperation and consideration are the keys that will make it work.

HOTELS AND HOSPITALITY: Once the task of selecting a convention site is complete, the Hotels and Hospitality Subcommittee can begin planning to host the Fellowship. To assist in this planning, it will be necessary to adopt and implement the procedures, or a reasonable facsimile, as they are outlined in this section. Care should be exercised in the development of this committee to insure that the tasks assigned to it are properly accomplished.

This subcommittee should consist of: a chairperson to conduct business meetings, make sure the duties of the committee are carried out and make progress reports to the sponsoring region, area and/or corporation; a co-chairperson to act as chairperson if necessary; and a secretary to record the minutes of the

subcommittee. Additional responsibilities may be added or removed if the Convention Committee, the sponsoring region, area and/or corporation may direct.

The work load of any one committee member will probably be determined by the size of the committee itself. There is probably no set formula for determining the size of this subcommittee. What worked for one convention may not work for the next. However, there is a set of objectives that need to be accomplished. Perhaps it will be best to weigh these objectives out and then determine who, on this committee, will be able to perform what tasks.

The first objective is to project an attendance figure to help determine the amount of meeting space which will be needed. The projected figure need not be accurate, although using criteria from previous conventions should help the committee to project a reasonable figure from which to work.

Once the committee has become comfortable with the projected attendance figure, they can plan how much meeting space will be needed, how the space can be utilized most effectively, and what would be the lowest possible expense. It would be wise to have alternate plans of action if the actual attendance should be higher or lower than the projected figure of attendance. Keep in mind the need for unscheduled meeting rooms.

Secondly, this committee will submit, for approval, any catering proposals such as coffee, banquets, and brunches. Special attention should be given to the wording of any proposal. Beware of open end or additional charges. Inform the hotel, as well as any other contractors who might be involved, that the Convention Committee is unable to pay for unexpected costs. Make them explain their bargain in detail, exerting yourself to be sure that there won't be any unexpected costs. Also make sure that they don't extend services which might be left unpaid.

Establish an arrangement so that a minimal number of individuals will have the authority to sign for services. Make it clear that the committee will only honor bills with specific signatures. Final approval of any contracts will be the responsibility of the full Convention Committee, or the corporation, if one is sponsoring the convention.

Information regarding transportation to the host site should be included on the convention flyer. Information regarding the location of airport, bus and

train stations in relationship to the convention site is necessary for members to know. It helps them to make appropriate arrangements for their arrival.

Finally, this committee should open and operate a hospitality area where the Fellowship can gather and relax and drink coffee as well as obtain local transportation, tourist, dining or other information pertinent to the hosting community.

Keep in mind that the majority of problems arise from 'poor communication. Good communication between the Hotels and Hospitality Subcommittee and all other subcommittees is extremely important. Almost everything that will be done by other committees will hinge on how well Hotels and Hospitality performs and communicates.

Try not to lose sight of the reason your committee is doing all of their work. Stay in tune with the spirit of recovery. As the convention draws near there will be a number of tasks available for newcomers to perform. Try to enlist the help of as many local members as possible.

FUND-RAISING AND ENTERTAINMENT: New members not familiar with the Twelve Traditions may be confused by the concept of "fund-raising" in Narcotics Anonymous because it is so unlike the kind of fund-raising done in other organizations---even nonprofit organizations. We never, under any circumstances, accept any monetary contribution from any outside source. We affiliate ourselves with no one, choosing to be entirely self-supporting through our own contributions. In Narcotics Anonymous, whenever we do need to "raise funds," we fund-raise from our own membership.

With the adoption of these guidelines, surplus world convention funds flow from one world convention to the next. This procedure was established by the group conscience of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, as expressed through our World Service Conference in 1985 and 1986.

As a result, world conventions have no need for fund-raising, but do have to do planning for entertainment similar to area and regional conventions.

Historical Perspective Early conventions were simple celebrations of recovery lacking in sophistication and grandeur. They voluntarily passed on all net proceeds to the next convention site. Those funds were used for

start up expenses like flyers, printing and postage. Early world conventions were able to avoid the necessity for fund-raising by managing to keep expenses in line with income. Guided by historical data, it was possible to estimate accurately the number of banquets, breakfasts and registrations, which in turn limited not only liability but also the need for fund-raising.

The development of a truly worldwide Fellowship brought about changes. Fund-raising and merchandising took place on a tremendous scale, draining the hosting region's resources and membership. Excessive promotion--the familiar drive for money, property and prestige--was also quite apparent, sometimes to the detriment of our primary purpose, as well as our relations with the general public.

Purpose of Fund-Raising We must remember that we have only one need for money in Narcotics Anonymous, and that is to further our primary purpose of carrying the message to the addict who still suffers.

The experience of many regions and areas is that fund-raising for conventions is extremely important as it generates interest and support from the local N.A. community, in addition to raising money. Our guidelines do not prohibit groups, areas or regions from hosting fund-raisers on behalf of conventions. We would, however, caution against placing an unreasonable financial drain on local resources for funds in support of the conventions, while at the same time welcoming activities which motivate attendance by increasing awareness of how conventions--like meetings--help us as members in our personal recovery.

Area and regional conventions will probably continue to have a need for a fund-raising and entertainment committee. This subcommittee would plan and carry out activities such as dances and picnics and will need to interface with other subcommittees such as C.I., Arts and Graphics, and the Administrative Subcommittee in order to successfully complete its projects.

This subcommittee also has responsibility for entertainment activities, selecting the bands or disc jockeys to be used at all fund-raising and convention dances. They also arrange for all other forms of entertainment which are provided in conjunction with the convention.

It is suggested that one budget be prepared for fund-raisers and a separate budget for entertainment activities.

Activities can be held throughout the year; however, we suggest that events be scheduled at least three or four months prior to the date of the convention. Communication about your events is extremely important. A list of planned functions should be prepared and distributed through the area and regional service structure to the groups you serve to spark interest, encourage participation and support. Functions which are successful are well planned and publicized. Poor turn out and unsuccessful fund-raisers can generally be traced back to a lack of planning and/or exposure within the local N.A. community.

Selecting a Chairperson When selecting a chairperson for the Fund-Raising and Entertainment Subcommittee, the duties and responsibilities associated with the task should be seriously considered. Experience has shown that a successful chairperson will have:

1. A good working knowledge of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions;
2. The willingness to work hard and the ability to motivate others;
3. The ability to deal effectively with people outside the Fellowship;
4. Demonstrated trustworthiness, especially where funds are concerned.

All Conventions The N.A. logo, which will be in use on flyers, T-shirts, mugs, etc., is the property of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. Our World Service Office holds the trademark on our logo and symbol. Special and serious care needs to be maintained in order to assure that the use of the N.A. logo is always in good taste and in keeping with our Twelve Traditions. Any N.A. service board or committee created through our Ninth Tradition may use the N.A. logo, as well as any Narcotics Anonymous group.

Care should be exercised concerning the concept and design of flyers. This is especially critical because

many of these flyers find their way into hospitals, institutions and other facilities which relate to N.A. Appropriate use of language and graphics is crucial; these flyers may represent N.A. to the public. Utilize the expertise of the Arts and Graphics Subcommittee.

Use of the convention "theme" for fund-raising and entertainment events is more likely to excite and increase the local members' involvement in the upcoming convention.

In conclusion, fund-raising events for conventions should be held first to generate interest and support for the convention, and second to raise money. All fund-raising events held in support of the conventions should include an explanation as to why money is needed. Finally, all of our events, be they to raise money or simply to provide entertainment for our Fellowship, should always be in good taste, consistent with our spiritual principles, and set a tone which emphasizes caring and sharing the N.A. way.

CONVENTION INFORMATION: The Convention Information (C.I.) Subcommittee may actually be considered a two-part committee. This committee, as the name indicates, serves the purpose of providing information about the convention both to N.A. members and certain nonmembers. These two jobs are handled very differently and, because of the resulting contacts with non-N.A.'s, those members chosen to serve on C.I. must have a thorough knowledge of the Twelve Traditions, especially as they apply to public relations and personal anonymity.

Information provided by C.I. may include a description of the planned event, dates, locations and other pertinent information. It is always important that convention subcommittees work closely together and because of the work which C.I. is responsible for, it becomes especially important for them to maintain close contact with the Programming, Hotels and Hospitality, and Arts and Graphics Subcommittees. All information must be up-to-date and accurate.

There should be no reason to promote the convention. It is an event of sharing and fellowship, and needs no "advertisement." It is, however, the duty of the C.I. subcommittee to communicate to all concerned persons and agencies about the coming events and encourage their participation. This is done in a spirit of providing information rather than of

promoting N.A. or its activities. In a subsequent section of these guidelines, entitled "Miscellaneous Questions and Answers," question number four provides additional information about promoting N.A. conventions.

The C.I. Subcommittee chairperson has the sensitive task of encouraging a large attendance without abandoning the principle of "attraction rather than promotion." Some of the following experience and suggestions are helpful in keeping all C.I. efforts within the dignity and spirit of N.A.:

A. Within the Fellowship

Preparation and distribution of flyers, programs and a map of the area, if necessary. Distribution is usually accomplished by handing out or mailing the information to the GSR's and ASR's in the hosting region with additional mailings to other RSC's and the WSO for inclusion in the *Newsline*. Members' names should never be used on an envelope with an N.A. identification. The Convention Committee should rent a post office box and that box number, with no reference to N.A. on the return address, can be used on all mailings. Flyers and personal phone contact numbers can be distributed freely within N.A. groups at regular meeting places, but even here, attraction is our aim and discretion and good taste should prevail.

B. Outside the Fellowship

Pre-convention informational activities of the C.I. Subcommittee's activities outside the Fellowship should be extended only to those hospitals, treatment centers and similar agencies which provide direct service to addicts. The purpose of this is to attempt to bring addicts in the hospital, center or facility to the convention. This is in keeping with our primary purpose. The H&I subcommittee in your area or region should be asked to help by providing names and addresses of those agencies and institutions which are already aware of the Fellowship and have H&I panels currently operating. Addresses of other agencies which have direct contact with addicts may be available from the area or regional P.I.

subcommittee. A short cover letter to the agencies should be included with the convention flyers or other information being mailed. The letter might be a simple statement acknowledging their ongoing support of recovery from addiction and a request that their clients be informed of the upcoming convention.

If the treatment centers are residential, a request might be made that the Convention Committee be advised about the number of residents they expect to attend. This information would then be turned over to the Registration Committee. A member of the C.I. Subcommittee may be assigned to the registration desk to greet and assist members and staff from treatment centers. Assuring that institutionalized addicts have the chance to attend a convention serves our primary purpose by showing them and the staff that there are indeed clean, recovering addicts in the outside world.

The C.I. Subcommittee does not do the type of work that is commonly associated with a public information committee. P.I. committees inform the public about Narcotics Anonymous, and the majority of that information is shared with non-addicts, often in the form of community presentations. The community at large is not included in the C.I. Subcommittee's efforts of distributing information about the convention. Letters or general announcements to professionals, other than those mentioned in paragraph B above, would not benefit the celebration of recovery which a convention represents. A convention is not an appropriate setting for a community presentation. Neither is it a beneficial time or place to encourage media participation.

It is recommended that pre-convention press releases to print and/or visual media sources be avoided. Anonymity, non-affiliation and "attraction rather than promotion" are just some of our principles which can be easily, although unintentionally, violated if the press is encouraged to attend a convention.

It is, however, a good idea for the C.I. Subcommittee to prepare a press packet to have available at the registration desk in case a reporter does show up. All members staffing the registration desk should be informed that if a reporter inquires they should give him/her a packet and immediately direct the reporter to a member of the C.I. Subcommittee. A well

informed, knowledgeable C.I. Subcommittee member should be readily available to accommodate the reporter's needs or questions. If pre-arranged, and whenever necessary or possible, a special room (press room) may be made available for just those occasions. That room would need to be staffed during designated hours by members of the C.I. Subcommittee.

The World Service Conference P.I. Committee works closely with the World Convention Corporation in all matters relating to public information and convention information at world conventions. The experience of regional P.I. subcommittees should also be sought and utilized by regional convention committees. P.I. committees can help put together a press packet and may also be helpful as volunteers in the press room or at registration.

REGISTRATION: Usually the first people convention attendees meet are those members manning the registration tables. How well they are greeted in many ways sets the tone for how well the convention comes off. Smooth, prompt, orderly, and hospitable service are key ingredients to successful registrations. Therefore, organization and planning by this committee is very important.

The Registration Subcommittee is one of the busiest committees of every convention. Although its most intensive work is completed in the weeks just prior to and during the convention, its responsibilities begin with the advance planning. This advance planning by the committee includes drafting the flyers and forms, which must be done well in advance (at least five or six months prior to the convention date) in order to allow sufficient time for review by the full committee. The mailing schedule for flyers and preregistration forms should also be established at this time.

The development of the convention flyer should be a cooperative effort between the Registration and the Arts and Graphics Subcommittees.

The Registration Subcommittee should develop the convention registration form for the Arts and Graphics Subcommittee. This form is customarily placed at the bottom of the Convention Flyer. After the convention flyer is completed, it is given to the Convention Information Subcommittee for distribution.

The number of members needed for this committee will depend on the anticipated attendance and length of registration hours. It is not advisable to have the

same members working five to eight hours without a break or a few members handling registration for a large rush of people. Therefore, the creation of shifts and work teams is important. The shift and team aspect is addressed in detail in a later section.

The first flyer announcing the convention should be made as soon as the dates are established and a contract or agreement is reached with the hotel. In this manner, participants will have an opportunity to schedule vacations or make other arrangements to attend the convention. This advance flyer can be distributed even if complete registration forms or convention fees have not been set. The flyer can be sent to the World Service Office so the convention can be mentioned in the *Newsline*. The committee should also do a direct mailing to N.A. members listed on attendance rosters of previous conventions. When preregistration and arrival registration information is available, the Registration Subcommittee prepares a finalized flyer. Copies of this flyer, and the registration forms, should also be sent to the WSO for *Newsline* inclusion and sent to all members on the mailing lists. The WSO *Newsline* includes announcements of conventions, and reaches thousands of N.A. members around the world, at no cost to the Convention Committee. It is an excellent way of circulating information about the convention.

Care should be exercised in the production of flyers and registration forms. They should be clear and informative, not confusing. Flyers should be attractive but need not be ornate or expensive.

The finalized flyer, with registration forms, should be sent at least four months prior to the convention date and again about forty-five days prior to the convention. In this way, members can make plans to attend and those who have forgotten or delayed in registering are reminded. Sometimes convention planning committees generate additional activities which were not scheduled when the original convention schedule was announced. The final mailing, at forty-five days prior to the convention, can be used to provide announcements of those changes or new activities.

A clear understanding should be reached between the Registration Subcommittee Chairperson, the full committee, and the Convention Committee Treasurer on the procedures for handling registrations and money. One person should be assigned the responsibility of

picking up registrations from the committee's post office box or business address at least two or three times a week. Registration form records should be maintained on a weekly basis and all money received transferred to the Convention Committee Treasurer prior to full Convention Committee meetings.

As each registration is received, by mail or a direct sale, a record should be made indicating information about the registrant and all money received. If free registrations are given out as part of promotional activities, the committees must keep careful records of what is provided and to whom. When registrations are made at fund-raising activities, numbered cash receipts are used as a confirmation to the convention. The Convention Committee Chairperson, in conjunction with the Treasurer, should establish a good working system for handling cash registrations received at these fund-raising activities. All registrations, with numbered cash receipts, are used for preparing confirmations. Each member of the Registration Subcommittee who is authorized to accept registration money should work out of one cash receipt book with three-part carbon copies.

The Registration Subcommittee conducts its activities within the scope of the budget authorized by the full committee. When funds are needed for expenses, they are obtained from the Convention Committee Treasurer. Undeposited cash received by the Registration Subcommittee should not be used for committee expenses, as it can result in confusion and possible misuse of funds.

The record system developed by the Registration Subcommittee should be simple and clearly understood by all members of the Committee. The records of all registrations and banquet or brunch ticket sales should be updated at least once a week. In this way, the full committee can be apprised of the financial status. This record system can be used to verify the Committee Treasurer's records, and provide an indication of the solvency of the convention.

A duplicate records system should be maintained for all Registration Subcommittee activities. A simple file box containing 3 X 5 cards arranged alphabetically is a simple and effective method. A card is made for each registration. One card contains all the information about each registrant, including all functions which have been paid, the receipt number and confirmation number (which are the same).

As each mailed registration is received, a confirmation card is sent to the registrant. Most conventions only send confirmation cards for registrations which are received by the announced cut off date. The cut off date for preregistrations is included on the convention flyer. Following is an example of a simple confirmation which has been used satisfactorily.

```

*****
* YOUR CONFIRMATION NUMBER FOR THE      *
* CONVENTION IS # _____            *
* PLEASE BRING THIS CARD WITH YOU WHEN  *
* YOU PICK UP YOUR REGISTRATION PACKET  *
* AT THE CONVENTION.                    *
*****

```

The Registration Subcommittee is responsible for preparing a complete registration packet. The packets include:

- A convention program
- Name tag or badge
- Tickets (banquet, brunch, etc.)
- Sightseeing information
- List of local restaurants with approximate price ranges (especially those open 24 hours)
- Marathon meeting list
- Souvenir items (N.A. phone books, keytags, etc.)

A Registration Committee can be organized with the following positions and responsibilities:

Chairperson: Oversees and coordinates all aspects of the Registration Subcommittee and reports to the Convention Committee, schedules work shifts and puts together work team members.

Vice-Chairperson: Assists the chairperson and may become more actively involved in one or more aspects of the Registration Subcommittee.

Secretary: Keeps minutes and records.

Mailings Subcommittee: Handles all registrations that comes through the mail. Mails out registration receipts and confirmation numbers as soon as possible.

Shift or Work Team: Writes receipts, collects registration money, and gives out registration packages at conventions.

The number of teams needed to work a shift will be determined by anticipated attendance and length of registration hours. A team of three members seems to work best. Two members write receipts and issue packages. The third team member is the deposit person who sits between them and collects the money and receipts.

During registration hours the treasurer and co-treasurer collect the registration money at regular periodic intervals from the deposit person.

A suggested shift for a team to work is three hours on and three hours off.

One last note for Registration Subcommittee members: At times there will be a lot of responsibility and pressure on you. It is important that you look out for one another. Set personalities aside and help each other in our spirit of unity and purpose. Our personal recovery comes first and you should do your part to make sure you and your fellow members do not use over the pressures of handling money. Stay clean and grow together!

ARTS AND GRAPHICS SUBCOMMITTEE: The Arts and Graphics Subcommittee is comprised of members who are artistic and energetic. Prior to the convention, this committee is responsible for designing and/or printing a banner, programs, tickets, flyers, convention posters and directional posters. Some conventions also produce coffee cups, T-shirts or other merchandise. The Arts and Graphics Committee also design these materials.

The Chairperson of the Arts and Graphics Subcommittee develops a budget which includes all printing and other expenses. Once the budget is developed, it should be presented to the Treasurer and to the Convention Committee for approval. The Arts and Graphics Subcommittee should present a variety of designs for each item to the full Convention Committee in order to provide a choice of selections.

Helpful Suggestions

1. Develop a set of priorities and keep first things first.
2. Encourage members with artistic talents to get involved.
3. Solicit the help of as many members as possible (especially newcomers).
4. Find a large room in which to work; banner and poster makers need a lot of space.
5. Utilize any and all resources available--members who work in hobby/craft stores, printing offices, copy shops, etc., may be able to provide services or supplies at discount rates.
6. Always present ideas and suggestions to the entire Convention Committee for feedback.
7. Always adhere to the group conscience of the Convention Committee, remembering that our Ultimate Authority is a loving God expressed through the group conscience.

PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE: Without a good program, the trouble and expense of putting on a convention isn't justified. The reports of the Program Subcommittee should therefore be given appropriate attention.

The Program Subcommittee plans all the workshops and meetings at the Convention. The members of the Program Subcommittee select speakers, meeting chairs and others to help with the program. They schedule all events to take place during the convention and prepare the written program to be distributed to attending members. They attempt to have a balance of workshops for newcomers, service-minded persons and spiritual discussions. One of the main problems in scheduling is the event of no-shows (people who don't call when they are unable to attend). The recommended procedure for speakers, chairpersons, readers or anyone else involved in the program is to note somewhere on the program or the registration package that a check-in table will be set up. Include the specific location and times. This way, all program participants can sign in, thus assuring the Program Subcommittee that they are willing and able to fulfill their responsibilities. In the event of a no-show, the

Program Subcommittee should have a pool of members available from which to select replacements.

The basic qualification for participation on the program of an N.A. convention is membership in N.A. A speaker or workshop chair at a convention shares his/her personal experience of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

Potential speakers and program participants are people who base their recovery on powerlessness over addiction, identify themselves as addicts and attend N.A. meetings to sustain their recovery. These qualifications assure an N.A. member gets an N.A. convention. The best speakers for conventions are those who address recovery as if their lives, as well as the lives of the listeners, depend on it. It is important to keep in touch with speakers as the convention draws near and assist them in any way possible to ensure their attendance.

Workshops are held to satisfy the needs of our membership for information or discussion on specific topics and services related to N.A. These workshops allow attending members to ask questions, and learn about various aspects of the program and recovery. It is important to schedule similar workshops consecutively rather than at the same time. This allows interested members to attend an entire series of related workshops rather than having to choose between two or more workshops they would like to attend.

Taping the speakers and workshops allows members who are unable to attend all functions the opportunity of hearing them at home, or sharing them with others. Care should be taken to inform the speakers and/or workshop participants that they are being taped. When contracting with someone to record meetings, it should be clearly understood that the copyrights to the tapes are held by the Convention Committee.

Procedures for reimbursing travel expenses vary with different conventions. Whenever funds are available, a speaker's travel expenses are paid, thereby assuring attendance and participation. Sometimes a complimentary room is provided to the participant as a way of deferring travel expenses. Hotels usually give the convention a certain number of complimentary rooms which can be used for this purpose. These financial considerations should be taken into account when the budget is being drawn up in order to provide the Program Subcommittee with an idea of available funds for securing speakers.

MERCHANDISING: The merchandising effort of any convention should be based strictly on the need to generate funds to ensure the success of the event. Too often the merchandising efforts of the Convention Committee detract from the primary focus. The focus of any convention is the celebration of recovery. Our efforts to generate funds from our members should be based solely on what is necessary to ensure that the convention is successful. If a Convention Committee finds that it is not necessary to generate considerable sums of money to cover expenses, then the merchandising effort should be kept to a minimum. Every Convention Committee wants to be able to provide commemorative items for the convention attendees, however, the efforts to do this should be done in such a way that a department store atmosphere is not created.

The Merchandising Subcommittee should be fairly business minded and have an understanding of the Twelve Traditions, especially regarding the sale of N.A. related items. The practice of allowing commercial vendors to sell their products at an N.A. convention violates our Sixth Tradition and should be strongly discouraged. Any time there is a person or group of people selling merchandise at an N.A. convention, other than the Merchandising Subcommittee, we are, in fact, sanctioning the idea that it is alright for individuals to generate personal profit in the name of our Fellowship. Any funds generated from an N.A. convention should be used to further enhance our Fellowship either locally or worldwide. Careful consideration should be made in negotiating the purchase price of items selected for sale. Usually three different bids are submitted for consideration. All items selected by the Merchandising Subcommittee should be purchased outright by the Convention Committee. In cases where funds are not available to purchase the items, then the possibility of a consignment agreement should be investigated. This will ensure that all merchandising done at a convention is done by the Merchandising Subcommittee or its equivalent body.

The Merchandising Subcommittee Chairperson prepares a budget consisting of the items to be sold and expenses incurred. This budget is then submitted to the Convention Committee for approval. Attached to the budget should be a complete summary of information regarding the ordering, marketing, and shipping of the items selected for sale at the

convention (i.e. individual item prices, service charges, consignment agreement terms if applicable, and the time frames for obtaining the items). The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for the sale of all merchandise.

The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for communicating with the Hotels and Hospitality Subcommittee for the provision of space for a store at the convention site. Store hours should be coordinated with the Program and the Hotels and Hospitality Subcommittees to assure proper scheduling with the facility management. The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for the storage of all items, in a secure place, and the delivery of all receipts promptly to the Convention Committee Treasurer along with an accurate list of remaining items in the inventory. Following the convention a final statement of remaining inventory is given to the Treasurer. This should be provided no more than one (1) week from the closing date of the convention. This information should be included in the Treasurer's final convention report. In addition to the statement of remaining inventory a complete set of records showing all subcommittee orders for merchandise, expenditures, and sales should be given to the Treasurer to assure accountability for all merchandise and expenditures.

On occasion there will be committee representatives from other N.A. conventions or similar activities (i.e. state, regional, world convention committee's) at a convention. Many times these committees would like to sell items from a previous or upcoming N.A. event. This should be allowed as long as it does not conflict with the merchandising effort of the sponsoring convention committee. One very practical approach is to establish a specific time and place for these sales to take place. This not only simplifies the situation for the sponsoring committee, but also allows conventioners the opportunity to purchase items from these committees at one time and in one place. The Merchandising Subcommittee coordinates arrangements to provide space for this type of sale to take place with the Hotels and Hospitality and the Program Subcommittees. It is customary for the sponsoring committee to receive some type of advance notification of a committee's intention to be present to sell. This allows the host committee ample time to plan for the provision of space and the scheduling of the sale so as not to interfere with the convention program. It is

important that the host committee be reasonably sure that such sales will benefit the Fellowship. This opportunity should not be provided for commercial vendors.

The Merchandising Subcommittee is responsible for the acquisition and sale of N.A. Conference-approved literature and other items selected for sale at the convention.

Although these steps may seem a bit excessive they are necessary to ensure that proper accountability is always maintained. Additionally, using a set of established guidelines makes merchandising much easier to handle. Finally, we all have a responsibility to ensure that our Fellowship, and not individuals, is the beneficiary of funds generated at N.A. conventions.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The purpose of this section is to focus on the most significant questions asked by Convention Committees. Presented are responses developed from the best experience available.

1. *What about N.A. members who are unable to pay registration and/or banquet fees. Should they be allowed to attend for free?*

First, the purpose of registration must be addressed. The registration fee is designed to defer the costs incurred for the facilities and functions of the convention. As outlined in the body of the handbook, these costs will vary and at times be unpredictable. Registration fees are not intended as a charge for meetings. Keep in mind that no convention has indicated they have turned away an addict who was unable to pay. However, there are methods in which this can be handled.

The most popular method is to provide a place at the registration desk where an individual with no money can go and a committee representative, responsible for making this type of determination, can be found. Members of the committee should be instructed to send people to this area to solve these problems when they occur. However, specific reference to this is not announced or written. Policy on this matter should be developed by the committee as a whole, long before the convention is held. Prior notification from an institution or hospital of the

number of residents planning to attend who may have an inability to pay would be helpful and should be encouraged by the committee in advance of the convention. In this way the full committee can participate in developing a policy to handle these situations. Due to the sensitive nature of the problem it is essential that all members of the committee working in the registration area be informed of the procedures involved and who the Convention Committee members are who are authorized to discuss and act on these requests.

2. *How do we set registration and banquet prices in relationship to the costs?*

The section on the Registration Committee, as discussed in this handbook, is intended to explain the major, if not all, factors related to costs incurred for convention facilities, functions and activities. The registration price should only be set after a careful examination of budgets and estimated attendance. Once this has been established, committees should consider the possibility of under budgeting and an incorrect estimation of attendance. If this should occur and the registration price was set low, the ramifications could be devastating to the committee and the Fellowship.

Careful consideration should be taken to allow for this possibility in establishing the registration price. Keep in mind that extra revenue will go to furthering our primary purpose.

Banquet prices are usually formulated from a fixed amount negotiated with the hotel. The common problem which occurs is that hotels only negotiate on the price for the meals and not the tax and gratuity which accompany all prices. So careful focus on this is essential in determining the price of the banquet ticket.

Once the price of the meal, tax and gratuity are established, attention should be placed on the possibility of not making the estimated banquet count. Hotels require prior notification of the number of persons attending the banquet. They must prepare the right number of meals and therefore if you are way under the agreed number, the committee must still pay for unused meals. If the committee is fortunate and has a number in excess of the agreed number of meals, the restaurant may be able to accommodate the situation if given enough time. If not, the committee must be careful not to oversell the number of banquet

tickets. The situation is made more complex when special diets may be requested or required, as these usually have different prices from the regular meals.

All of these factors should be taken into consideration when establishing the banquet price. Most conventions have found it practical to charge a standard price even if some of the dinners will cost less. In this manner the committee can balance low attendance, unexpected additional meal costs and meet other expenses related to the banquet.

3. *Who provides for the basic tasks of convention set up and break down? How does security fit into the Convention Committee scheme of things?*

In considering the operations of the conventions, it is important to cover issues of security and functional aspects. This includes crowd control, set up and break down tasks, as well as transportation for out-of-towners. All of these tasks will probably involve every member of the committee and all subcommittees although it may be considered a separate committee. Most frequently these tasks are managed by the Hotels and Hospitality Subcommittee in cooperation with the hotel staff. The needs and resources are identified and planned for in the latter stages of planning for the convention. This is an area of work that many of the newer volunteers can be assigned to.

Security is necessary whenever large functions take place in order to maintain harmony between the hotel and the convention. Most hotels have rules and by signing the contract the committee indicates agreement with those rules. Every attempt should be made to maintain harmony and reduce the negative reflection on N.A. or future conventions. However, security decisions should remain with the Executive Committee and the hotel staff.

This function is sometimes referred to in some conventions as the Bulldog Committee, Blood Sweat and Tears Committee and the Operations Committee.

4. *To what extent should the convention be publicized by a public information committee?*

A serious danger exists with respect to conventions and inappropriate activity in the area of public information. In the non-N.A. sphere of activities, conventions are most frequently used as media events. In this way, social service, business and religious organizations encourage public attention to their

activities, members, goals and objectives. This is most often done as a means of promoting their organizations, their goals and objectives. N.A. on the other hand, if we are to live within our Traditions, should avoid this form of public information or promotional activity.

Public information should be available at all conventions as a precaution, should any media discover the convention and desire to report about it. The Convention Information Subcommittee should be prepared to convey to interested media members the appropriate ways in which they can correctly report activities of the convention and at the same time not endanger the anonymity of members or allow the media to convey promotion rather than attraction.

Convention information endeavors should be encouraged with respect to increased participation from hospital treatment programs and institutions, so that their staff, patients and residents might be encouraged to attend and benefit from the convention experience.

Conventions are transitory activities and should not have an impact on the public information plans and programs of the local N.A. membership in whose community the convention is being held. The tendency to capitalize on the "event" of a convention to promote N.A. through the local media is inappropriate and a violation of our Traditions.

5. *What about special interests? To what extent should special meetings or activities be provided at the world convention?*

N.A. world conventions are many things to many people, but most N.A. members would agree that the world convention is primarily a celebration of our shared recovery, a living testimony to our worldwide unity, and a public statement of our common purpose--to help the addict who still suffers. With these purposes in mind, the idea of special interest meetings at the world convention is narrow and divisive. Special interest meetings compromise the spirit of unity pervading world conventions and subvert the purpose of these conventions.

We believe that N.A. world conventions are not an appropriate place for special interest meetings of Narcotics Anonymous. Unity, however, is something that can always be increased and enhanced. World conventions offer an opportunity for recovering

addicts from different back-grounds and lifestyles to learn about each other and, by doing so, break down any remaining barriers between us. The more we know about each other the more we can help each other.

It is recommended, therefore, that world convention committees be particularly sensitive to the differences in backgrounds of N.A. members and be careful to select N.A. speakers who represent a variety of experiences and lifestyles and who carry a message of commonality and unity in recovery.

We also recommend and encourage the Program Subcommittees of world conventions to schedule workshops open to all N.A. members--which address topics such as sexuality, gender, race, ethnic background, etc., in recovery. These workshops allow us to gain a greater understanding of each other and bring us closer together rather than separating us.

Part Two

Combined States, Regional
and Area Conventions

Legal and Corporate Matters

Bidding to Host Conventions and
the Need for Developing Guidelines

Fund Distribution

COMBINED STATES, REGIONAL AND AREA CONVENTIONS

Part Two does not apply to the World Convention. It is intended to be a guide for combined states, regional and area conventions or similar activities.

A Convention Committee should be a subcommittee of the hosting or sponsoring ASC or RSC. This places the convention within the N.A. service structure via the Ninth Tradition by making it a committee directly responsible to those it serves. This point needs special emphasis. The Convention Committee is totally responsible to the hosting service committee and exists only because that service committee formed it. Any convention not reporting to a branch of the N.A. service structure is not responsible to the Fellowship and hence is not an N.A. convention.

Convention Committee guidelines should be the first order of business and should be reviewed and approved by the host ASC or RSC. Recommended guidelines are covered throughout this text.

The Convention Committee should be allowed sufficient leeway to perform its responsibilities and should not bog down the host service committee with routine business matters that can be handled within the Convention Committee. Also, the Convention Committee Chairperson should give a report of the committee's activities at each of the hosting service committee meetings. This keeps the ASC or RSC in touch with how things are going and enables them to provide support and guidance when needed. As with any subcommittee of area and regional service, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the hosting ASC and RSC should also keep in close contact with the Convention Committee and its officers.

Conventions, as in any service sponsored by N.A. service boards or committees, should conform to N.A. principles and focus on our primary purpose of carrying the message. When considering or preparing a bid to host an area, regional, combined states, or worldwide convention, there are questions we should ask ourselves such as: "Is there a need?" "Is it practical?" and "Will it conflict with our ability to support our ASC, RSC, services and groups?" These questions need to be weighed by the potential host ASC or RSC. Some of us have found that our area or region was not prepared to handle such an event. Sometimes

we found that it would take too much time away from our trusted servants who were supporting committees such as phonelines, P.I., H&I, literature and other services that require stable support to properly serve the Fellowship. When this situation is encountered, we should realize there are other ways of bringing large numbers of members together such as picnics, camp-outs and Fellowship days. These events do not require large cash outlays, labor-intensive duties and the related financial and legal responsibilities necessary to host a convention. The potential for financial and legal complications are always present when hosting a convention. If problems occur, they are the responsibility of the host service committee. We should be prepared to closely evaluate all legal and financial commitments before entering into them. When these problems occur they substantially impair the ability of the local membership to provide N.A. services.

Financial benefit may be gained from holding a convention but should not be the major purpose. This tends to divert us from our primary purpose and a large amount of funds can disrupt a service structure as much as a total lack of funds.

There are different types of conventions, such as area, regional, combined state, and world conventions. Some areas and regions are stable enough to have the available trusted servants hold an annual convention without affecting other N.A. services, but this is currently an exception rather than the rule. Combined states conventions seem to be a practical alternative to the continued stress of handling an annual convention. Combined states conventions are hosted by a different area or region each year so that no one local N.A. community has to repeatedly bear the weight of putting on a convention. This gives areas and regions who are unable to host an annual convention the opportunity of holding a convention. Examples of such combined states conventions are the East Coast Convention, the Western States Unity Convention, and the Mid-Coast Convention. Some combined states conventions may be limited to designated geographic areas. This allows the regions in a particular location to take turns hosting the convention while simultaneously providing the support and experience needed to the current host region.

Combined states conventions may reduce the need for an assortment of area and regional conventions. Having a reduced number of combined states

conventions may increase the Fellowship's enthusiasm and participation because it is truly a momentous event for all to attend rather than being "this month's convention."

Conventions are truly spectacular events, but we must adequately weigh the impact such an immense undertaking has on the local N.A. community before deciding to forge ahead.

LEGAL AND CORPORATE MATTERS

Combined states conventions which are held in several different regions may need to consider a different plan of action. It may be desirable to develop a separate corporation that will work within the boundaries of the conventions (similar to that of WCCNA). This will prevent the need for starting and terminating a new corporate or organizational structure from year to year.

The guidelines governing this type of convention and its activities should be a "combined" effort of a convention committee/corporation. The corporation should be made up of members from all the regions within the boundaries where the convention will be held. This corporation is responsible for the convention and its activities just like an RSC. In order to accommodate a "service board" of this type, it must still be responsible to an element of the service structure. The most logical way to accommodate this is to have the corporation be attached to and responsible to the region hosting the currently planned convention. A corporation created within the Fellowship is not autonomous and must be attached to the service committee and/or N.A. community it represents through carefully written by-laws. The convention corporation is responsible for overseeing proper, consistent bookkeeping and reporting. It also ensures that proper reports are made with the appropriate branches of government (i.e. Form 990, state filings where applicable, etc.)

Conventions of Narcotics Anonymous, as defined by the Fellowship, are celebrations of recovery. Although the intent is only to celebrate recovery, as the convention interacts with outside individuals and corporations, it forces us to act like a business enterprise also. It is this business-like behavior that forces the convention into the public arena where it is

subject to other outside enterprise and possibly public attention. Due to this, it is essential that all conventions conduct their work within the framework of the Twelve Traditions. It is imperative that, as a convention grows, the reality of these business-like needs be addressed for the protection of each member as well as Narcotics Anonymous as a whole.

Among the important aspects of this business-like activity is the financial liability that such events entail. The committee responsible for the convention is financially liable for injuries, damages and financial loss resulting from the convention. If the committee is properly organized and protected, the individual members of the Convention Committee would not normally be liable for damages or suit.

However, if the convention is not properly organized or protected, then the member who signs the contract and others on the committee are liable. If the convention is organized on behalf of Narcotics Anonymous (which they all are) then all those assets connected to Narcotics Anonymous may become liable if injury or loss results. So, the reality of liability both from a contractual and public injury standpoint is fearfully present. Our duty is to be responsible and to ensure that Narcotics Anonymous is not brought into public controversy. This will protect N.A. assets from being exposed as a result of litigation. As a member of Narcotics Anonymous and the Convention Committee, you have the direct responsibility for the integrity of convention affairs handled on behalf of Narcotics Anonymous.

The most logical methods of protection are forming a nonprofit corporation and/or obtaining the necessary liability insurance. These lend protection to the members involved in the N.A. service committee and allow for a more formal approach to dealing with the public. When planning a regional or area convention, if there is a regional service office that has been incorporated, it is possible to utilize this existing corporation rather than create another. If a regional office does not exist, then a temporary convention corporation may be formed pending the establishment of a regional office. Once a regional office corporation has been established, consideration should be given to having the office take over legal responsibility for the convention and having the convention corporation dissolved. This will allow consistency, continuity and unity within the

Fellowship. In any case, all corporations must be guided by the Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous and be directly accountable to the N.A. community that created them.

In the case of combined states conventions which move throughout many states or regions, a corporation may be formed in the most feasible state, with board members drawn from those geographical areas or states where the convention will occur. The corporate by-laws should provide that the corporation should connect itself to and be responsible to the hosting regional service committee as it moves geographically. This will promote continued financial and spiritual accountability to the Fellowship. Since the convention moves from state to state it is necessary to inform the appropriate state agencies of the change in officers when filing state or federal report forms. Also, it is helpful to keep the same accountant so that past records will be kept in a single place and the hosting service committee need not reinvent the bookkeeping system and filing with appropriate state and federal agencies.

There are some misconceptions about conventions and corporations that create conflict. Hopefully, the following statements will provide clarification on some of those misconceptions.

1. *A convention should incorporate to allow for its bills to be paid and avoid liability if the committee has overestimated its income or funds have been embezzled.*

If the corporation was willing to go bankrupt and not pay its bills this would be true. However, the principles of our program require us to be responsible for our actions. This then requires our members (whether a corporation exists or not) to assume responsibility for their actions. This makes it essential that caution be taken when estimating registration, banquet counts, T-shirt sales, etc., and that good personal conduct of our members is exercised at the convention. It is also important to obtain liability insurance to protect against unexpected events.

2. *A corporation will automatically be allowed tax exemption.*

This is not true. However, an application can be made by the corporation or the committee to the Internal Revenue Service and the state tax agency for

tax exemption. Approval can take up to two years before exempt status is officially granted. During this period the corporation may not be allowed to take advantage of the tax exempt status.

3. *A Convention Committee or corporation is autonomous and not part of Narcotics Anonymous, thus the committee or corporation can function as an independent entity answering only to itself.*

This is a grave misconception and may be devastating to the members of that committee or corporation. Based on the principles of our program, N.A. conventions are part of N.A. and, as a celebration of recovery, are a service of N.A. Therefore, regardless of legal title, a gathering of addicts for the purpose of recovery is Narcotics Anonymous, and an organization created by these members to facilitate its function must then be governed by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous. This makes their actions a direct reflection of Narcotics Anonymous. So, no N.A. service committee or corporation is autonomous from the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. The corporation and Convention Committee must be responsible to a service branch of N.A. for it to qualify as an N.A. convention.

4. *It is mandatory to form a corporation when having a convention.*

This is not true. There are other avenues available. Extreme care should be taken when evaluating whether or not a convention needs the protection of a corporate structure. It is important to contact the WSO and/or an attorney in determining whether to incorporate or not.

If your region or area is planning to form a corporation, the following processes should be followed:

1. Contact the WSO for assistance and information.
2. Contact an attorney in the region/area where the corporation is to be formed.
3. Develop by-laws to be approved by the region/area and submit the required applications to the state in which the corporation is to be formed.
4. There are certain forms that need to be filed whether incorporated or not: one is the Application for Federal Tax Identification Number. This simple form is used to get the I.D.

number necessary to open bank accounts and transact other types of business. This number does not entitle its holders to tax exempt status.

It is not possible within these guidelines to provide a uniform set of by-laws, and other paper work necessary to form a corporation, due to the varying corporate legalities that exist in different states. The WSO can provide you with guidance and language that relates to the Fellowship and aid in your aims of becoming responsible to the Fellowship.

BIDDING TO HOST CONVENTIONS AND THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINES

The most common procedure for becoming the host site of a convention is that of bidding. This section is directed to combined states, regional, and area conventions and similar types of activities.

It is imperative that a bid or a convention committee or corporation be "directly responsible to those they serve." A regional service committee (RSC), or some other arm of the Fellowship, should take the responsibility of seeing that a bid or convention committee adheres to the Twelve Traditions and operates according to specified guidelines. The RSC should approve guidelines for both the bid and convention committees.

When the guidelines are being developed there are several areas which need to be taken into consideration. The name, the program, and all activities of the convention should reflect an atmosphere of recovery in N.A. An understanding of the Traditions is most important.

Traditions have often been compromised by convention committees. When strong personalities take over, spiritual principles have a tendency to go by the wayside. Our Twelve Steps, Traditions, and literature have a specific focus, and our conventions should maintain that focus with a strict adherence to the Traditions. By so doing, our conventions will reflect our primary purpose as well as an atmosphere of recovery in N.A.

A bid committee cannot start of its own volition. It should begin as an ad-hoc committee of an ASC or RSC, whichever applies.

Any bidding site committee should assume certain responsibilities both to itself and the Fellowship as a whole. Before a bid committee is started, the ASC or RSC should search itself to understand a few things.

At first sight, hosting a convention does not seem like all that much trouble, but maybe the ASC/RSC should ask a few questions of itself, like "Why do we want to host this convention?" "Can this area/region support the kind of effort that is needed without being harmful to itself?" "Are we thinking of doing this to bolster the treasury?" If you begin asking these questions at the ASC or RSC you will find out how relative they are. If hosting a convention is going to create more problems than it will solve, then hosting a convention may not be a good idea at this time.

If the ASC/RSC has searched itself and come up with positive answers to these questions, then elect a bid committee. Entrust them with the task of researching costs, attendance figures, programs, contracts, hotels, how many people will be needed, and what criteria need to be met to present the bid.

Once all the pertinent information is gathered it should be presented to the ASC/RSC. They, not the bid committee, should determine whether or not to continue with a prospective host site.

FUND DISTRIBUTION

It is important to understand that conventions are not the funding source of Narcotics Anonymous and are not established to support special projects or the specific interests of the Convention Committee. Projects of the region or their support should be left to regional service committee contributions. Other than the generation of a prudent reserve for the next convention there should be little or no funds created as a result of a convention. However, excess funds may develop as a result of the activities of a convention. At the close of a convention the distribution of those funds has proven to be a significant issue. The following information provides clarification and a method of distribution for those funds that will be helpful in avoiding conflicts.

An important consideration for a Convention Committee is the start up funds to be set aside for the following year's convention. In regional or combined states conventions, a prudent reserve should be retained

for this purpose. The amount of the prudent reserve to be set aside should be determined by the Convention Committee and approved by the regional service committee. If the convention is a combined states convention it should be decided by the convention corporation or host committee and approved by the hosting regional service committee. The amount should be entered into the convention's operational by-laws (a reasonable prudent reserve is \$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00). Increasing the prudent reserve should require, (1) a 2/3 vote by the Convention Committee (or board of directors if incorporated) and, (2) a 2/3 vote by the hosting regional service committee. It is extremely important that all convention matters concerning prudent reserve be voted on by both the Convention Committee and the regional service committee members in order to allow objective input from the regional service committee whose concerns are separate from the functional aspects of the convention.

Once a prudent reserve has been established, the next consideration will be the surplus funds over and above the prudent reserve. A Convention Committee's main task is to facilitate a convention for the purpose of celebrating recovery. Disbursement of excess funds as a result of the convention should not be a task of the Convention Committee. Distribution of funds resulting from conventions should be done by the service committee to whom the Convention Committee is responsible. The service committees will distribute the funds according to the normal practice accepted by Narcotics Anonymous. It is advisable that the hosting service committee not retain more than a minimal amount of the excess funds as large amounts of money tend to disrupt our service committees and divert us from our primary purpose.

Once a prudent reserve is established, fund-raising efforts should not be needed, registration and other fees can be set at levels that will limit the accumulation of excess funds. This allows the Convention Committee to focus on the task of facilitating the convention. In the case of combined states or coastal conventions, the excess funds over prudent reserve should be turned over to the hosting regional service committee for distribution. When turning over excess funds to the regional service committee, the Convention Committee Treasurer should provide a financial statement for the regional service committee's review. This will allow the committee to

terminate its existence and allow the new host committee to begin the next convention.

If all conventions follow these practices, whether the convention is part of one region or services several regions, the development of a prudent reserve and distribution of surplus funds as indicated will further maintain unity within our Fellowship. There will also be a significant reduction in the personality conflicts within the committee and the casting of unwarranted suspicion on the members of the Convention Committee. Therefore, as the convention attains its prudent reserve, the need for fund-raising to produce the convention will be greatly reduced and eventually eliminated. In addition, the regional service committee will be unaffected, financially, as a result of hosting a convention to celebrate recovery.

If a convention operates as an activity of a regional corporation the principles discussed above about distribution of funds should still be followed. We must remember that we have only one need for money in N.A. and that is to further our primary purpose which is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.

Part Three

World Convention Corporation
of Narcotics Anonymous
Bidding to Host a World Convention
WCCNA Management
Financial Management
WCNA Geographics

WORLD CONVENTION CORPORATION OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

The World Convention Corporation of Narcotics Anonymous is a wholly owned subsidiary of the World Service Office. The convention corporation is the agent for the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous for the conduct and management of the world convention of Narcotics Anonymous and such other activities as the World Service Conference may from time to time direct or authorize. The by-laws of the World Convention Corporation for Narcotics Anonymous were adopted in 1986.

The members and directors of the corporation are:

- A. The Vice-Chairperson of the World Service Conference.
- B. The Vice-Chairperson of the World Service Board of Trustees.
- C. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the World Service Office, and three additional members of the World Service Office Board of Directors as the World Service Office Board may select.
- D. One member from each of the committees of the three immediately previously held world conventions as may be selected by that committee, providing that at the time appointed in the by-laws following the conclusion of each successive world convention, the member from the world convention which was held first shall step down as a member. The retiring member will be replaced by a member from the most recently completed world convention host committee.
- E. Two members form the host committee for the site scheduled for the next world convention.
- F. Two members will be elected at the annual meeting of the WSC. These members shall have not less than five years clean time at the time of their election. They shall serve for one year terms of office as described in the by-laws. [See Note I]

BIDDING TO HOST A WORLD CONVENTION

The World Service Conference, at their annual meeting, selects the site for world conventions. The procedure for selection of a world convention requires that a bid be submitted to the World Convention Corporation which then forwards to the World Service Conference the appropriate information for the decision making.

1. Bids must be from a committee formed by a regional service committee with fifty (50) meetings or more.
2. The region must have had conventions previously and some of those Convention Committee members must be on the bid committee.
3. The region must have seven (7) members attending WCNA with two (2) of those having five years or more clean time.
4. The region has not had a world convention within the prior four years in the region and/or zone.
5. The region must have a letter of support for the bid from the regional service committee and surrounding regional service committees.
6. The region provides a letter of summary information as to why the region wants the convention and how it can best serve the Fellowship by hosting the convention. This is referred to as the "letter of need."
7. The region provides a written history of the region and conventions that have taken place within the region.
8. The region provides a letter from bid committees explaining their experience with past conventions and the qualifications of the principal committee members along with information on their clean time.
9. The region provides a written contract offer and binder from hotels where the convention would be held, if the bid is accepted. The offer must

contain figures on room rates, banquet rates, coffee expenditures, projected registration rates and other financial information that may be helpful in understanding the bid.

Bids are prepared in compliance with the aforementioned requirements. A copy of the hotel fact sheet is completed and sent along with the bid. All of the bid material is then sent to the World Convention Corporation for Narcotics Anonymous (WCCNA) by October 1. WCCNA reviews each bid to make sure that all of the requirements have been met.

The "letter of need" for each bid that has met the requirements is then published in the January Conference Agenda Report. This is the basis upon which the Fellowship decides where the next convention will be held.

WCCNA MANAGEMENT

The world convention is an activity of the World Service Conference under the management responsibility of the World Convention Corporation. In January of each year, the convention corporation recommends several options for world convention locations in the Conference Agenda Report. The participants of the Conference vote to select the location for the convention. However, the site selected in this manner is not utilized until sixteen months after the succeeding World Service Conference.

The N.A. community of the site selected by the Conference to host the convention organizes a "host committee" of members in the city where the convention is to be held in order to accomplish the routine activities of the convention. The host committee becomes a subcommittee of the World Convention Corporation and is directly responsible to the corporation. The World Convention Corporation maintains all final authority and responsibility for management of the convention. In this manner, the world convention is an activity directly responsible to and managed by the N.A. Fellowship through the World Service Conference. All income and expenses are managed by the World Convention Corporation.

The host committee is organized and operates

according to the subcommittee outline contained in Part One of these Guidelines. The subcommittees are responsible to the full host committee and the Board of Directors of WCCNA. The WCCNA Board may work directly with some subcommittees on specific matters.

With respect to the Hotels and Hospitality Subcommittee of the host committee these policies apply. Final approval of any contracts will be the responsibility of the World Convention Corporation of Narcotics Anonymous.

[See Note 2]

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The world convention is managed in such a manner as to accomplish three goals: Provide a suitable celebration of recovery, be financially responsible and minimize the expense to those attending. Effort should be exerted to balance these objectives in planning and financial management. Each year the convention should provide sufficient revenue over expenses to satisfactorily finance the needs of the next convention, meet administrative expenses and help establish a reasonable prudent reserve. The corporation provides a financial report to the World Service Conference each year.

WCNA GEOGRAPHICS

The world convention is held in different locations each year according to the rotational system described below. Conceivably the convention could be held in each of the nine zones before recurring in any one zone. There is a requirement that the convention not be held in one zone more frequently than every four years. The zones consist of six in the continental U.S., one in Canada, one in Australia and one in Europe/Asia. The zoning is reviewed by the World Convention Corporation for Narcotics Anonymous annually for possible revision, as the needs of the Fellowship outside the continental United States grow.

ZONE ONE (NORTHEASTERN U.S.)

Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, D.C., West Virginia

ZONE TWO (SOUTHEASTERN U.S.)

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virgin Islands, Virginia

ZONE THREE (CENTRAL NORTHERN U.S.)

Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

ZONE FOUR (CENTRAL SOUTHERN U.S.)

Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas,

ZONE FIVE (NORTHWESTERN U.S.)

Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

ZONE SIX (SOUTHWESTERN U.S.)

Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah

ZONE SEVEN (CANADA)

ZONE EIGHT (EURASIA)

ZONE NINE (AUSTRALIA)

Note 1: These paragraphs were paraphrased from the minutes of the 1986 World Service Conference action to create the World Convention Corporation of Narcotics Anonymous.

Note 2: Certain editorial changes were made during production of these guidelines in order to facilitate clarity. They are listed below:

- page 10, Second paragraph of Purpose of Fund-Raising section, "The experience of many regions and areas is that fund-raising for conventions..." ["world" was deleted due to inconsistency with common practice].
- page 11-12, All Conventions section, "Our World Service Office holds the trademark..." ["copyright" was changed to "trademark" in the interest of accuracy].
- page 26, Question number five, the references to the World Service Board of Trustees were deleted for two reasons: the World Service Conference approved the language, and the WSB has since changed its opinion.
- page 43, A motion passed at the 1987 WSC instructed that three sentences/paragraphs be moved to Part Three. Two of the three sections (included below) were not included due to a lack of continuity and clarity.

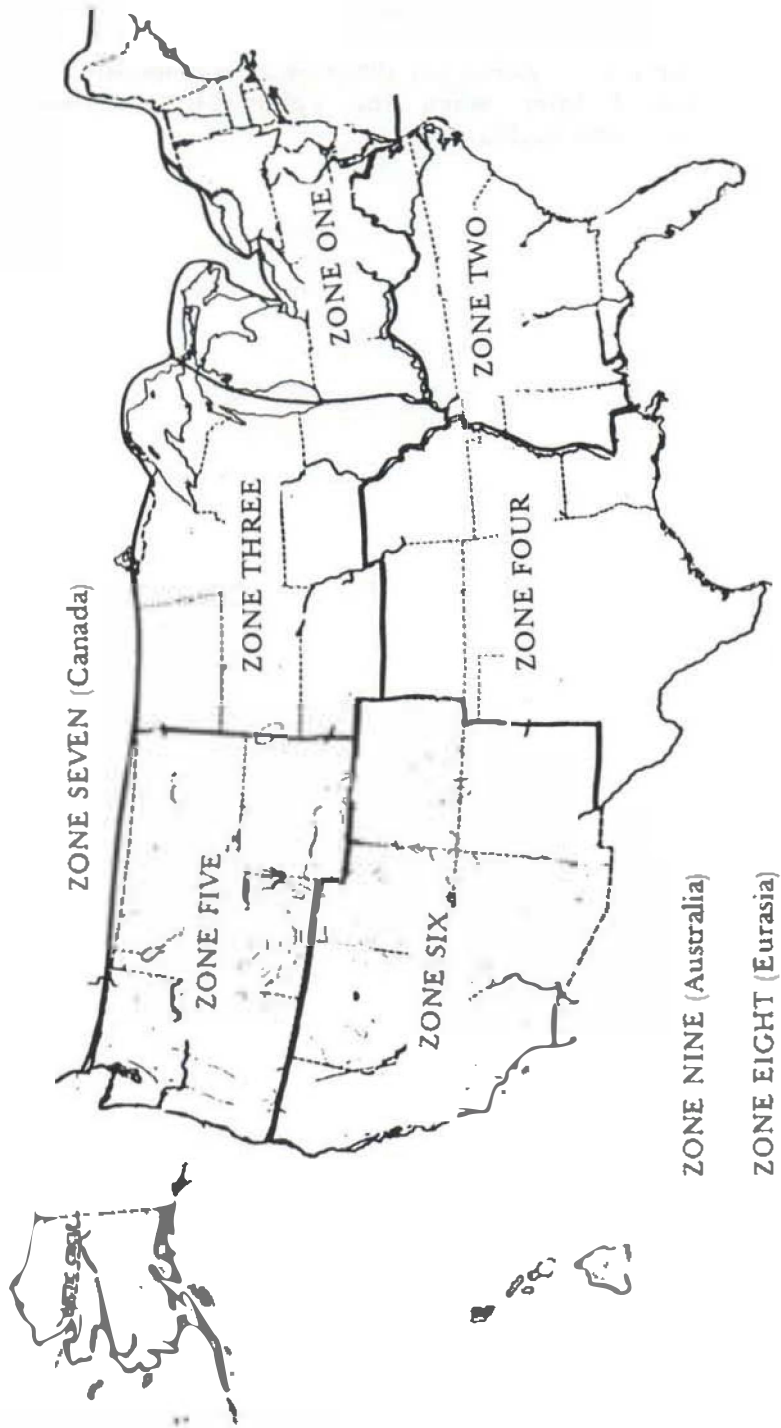
This subcommittee should consist of: a chairman to conduct business meetings, make sure the duties of the committee are carried out, and make progress reports to the WCNA Executive Committee; a co-chairman, whose job will be to act as chairman if necessary; and a secretary to record the minutes of the subcommittee. Additional responsibilities may be added or detracted as either the WCNA Executive Committee or subcommittee may deem necessary.

These would be used by WSC, WSO, Board of Trustees, or any WSC subcommittee that may wish to meet as well as for use in other business

matters.

Note 3: Zones for other areas not identified will be added later when the Fellowship in these areas warrants such action.

MAP OF GEOGRAPHIC ZONES



HOTEL SEARCH FACT SHEET

Name of Facility: _____ Date: _____

Phone #: _____ Sales Representative: _____

Convention Needs:

1. 2,000-3,000 Attendees / approx. 750-1,000 rooms
2. Banquet Attendees 1,200-2,000
Time & Day: Saturday 6:00-10:00 p.m.
3. Brunch Attendees 800-1,400
Sunday 11:00 a.m.-1:30
4. Dates: Labor Day Weekend

Pertinent Data from Hotel:

A. General Information

1. Size (number of rooms): _____
2. Conference Space: _____
3. Recreational Facilities: _____

B. Rooms

1. Best Rates:
 - a. Single: _____
 - b. Double: _____
 - c. Triple: _____
 - d. Quad: _____
2. Rates guaranteed for one week before to one week after convention? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Maximum number of persons per room permitted _____
4. Check in and out times:
In: _____ Out: _____

C. Banquet and Brunch

1. Price per person inclusive [Tax and Gratuities]
Banquet _____
2. Price per person inclusive [Tax and Gratuities]
Brunch _____
3. Snack Services _____
4. Coffee Shop Occupancy _____

D. Meeting Room Needs (These rooms should be furnished by the hotel at no additional charge contingent on the number of rooms booked)

1. Space for 24 hour marathon meeting
2. Space for additional eight meetings per day
 - a. Thursday: Registration / Welcome / Marathon meeting Yes ☐ No ☐
 - b. Friday: Approx. eight rooms, 75-100 persons each / One room 1,000-1,500 Yes ☐ No ☐
 - c. Saturday: Approx. eight rooms, 75-100 persons each / Banquet Room 2,000 Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Complementary (no cost) meeting space? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - a. How many registrations needed? _____
4. Hospitality Suite? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - a. How many registrations needed? _____
5. Dance Space? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - a. To facilitate how many? _____
 - b. Both Friday and Saturday nights? _____
 - c. Curfew? _____
6. Registration booth/room? Yes ☐ No ☐
7. Committee offices? Yes ☐ No ☐

E. Miscellaneous Needs

1. Coffee Needs
 - a. 2,000-4,000 gals. Cost: _____
 - b. 24 hours a day? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - c. Replenishing/Resupply Commitment: Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Pool Hours
 - a. Thursday—Sunday _____
 - b. Whirlpool? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Parking
 - a. Valet available or required? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - b. Free and adequate space available? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - c. Parking Costs _____

4. Complementary/Discount Attraction Passes?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Buses and Transportation available to attractions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Lobby Meeting Privileges?

Yes ☐ No ☐

F. General Notes/Comments: _____

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

1. *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity.*
2. *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.*
3. *The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.*
4. *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or N.A. as a whole.*
5. *Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.*
6. *An N.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the N.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
7. *Every N.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
8. *Narcotics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
9. *N.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
10. *Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the N.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
11. *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*
12. *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

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