

NCA Statement on Convention Locations

One of the core components of NCA's service to our discipline is hosting an annual convention. Our leadership is committed to doing everything it can to ensure that this event continues to take place every year and is planned and implemented both programmatically and administratively in ways that allow for a positive experience for as many of our members as possible. Policies and procedures have been instituted to support this goal, and this document is designed to explain what they are and some of the logic behind them.

KEY POLICY AND RATIONALE

NCA's policy is to honor all contractual obligations regarding our convention. The fundamental concern underlying this commitment is that cancelling a convention would deprive potential attendees of a valuable professional experience. While issues specific to particular convention locations may arise periodically and result in some potential attendees choosing not to attend in a given year, proceeding with the convention as contracted allows for that personal choice to participate or not.

There are also several important financial reasons for honoring contractual obligations regarding our convention. First, hotel contracts include financial penalties for cancellation that are extremely large and get progressively larger as the convention date approaches. Cancellation clauses are standard in hotel contracts and, while we strive to negotiate the lowest specific amounts, their inclusion is not negotiable. Factors in determining specific penalties can include, but are not limited to, expected guest room revenue, food and beverage revenue, and outlet and ancillary revenue. Even with a successful negotiation, cancellation penalties will be significant.

Second, NCA contracts with more than twenty separate vendors to support the annual convention in myriad ways such as audio-visual equipment, transportation, and convention decorators. These contracts can carry financial penalties for cancellation as well, the amounts of which depend on the timing of cancellation.

Finally, in addition to expenses incurred with cancellation, NCA also faces loss of revenue if the convention is not held. The convention is one of the key pieces of our operating budget that allows us to sustain the vitality of the organization throughout the year.

The question of relocation has also been raised. Of course the first step in relocating would be cancelling an existing contract at an original location, and the reasons for not doing that are articulated above. Contracts are typically signed five to seven years in advance to ensure that we can get the large amount of meeting space and number of guest rooms needed for the NCA convention. This advance contracting is also necessary to ensure that we are able to meet at the same time each year. There are a limited number of hotels that can accommodate a convention with our requirements, and there is competition from other groups for those

hotels. That means that it would be very difficult to find an alternate location close to the date of the event.

OUR APPROACH TO CHOOSING CONVENTION SITES CAREFULLY

While it is NCA's policy to honor contractual obligations related to our convention, we do work hard to make thoughtful choices about the contracts we sign in the first place. We have a working committee composed of members of the association that review siting options. The committee follows an evaluation process that involves assessment of many critical dimensions of a location such as commitment to workplace equality and diversity, working conditions and practices, environmental initiatives, and ADA practice and accessibility in order to make their siting recommendations.

ISSUES THAT EMERGE AFTER CONTRACTS ARE SIGNED

Given that we sign hotel contracts several years in advance, even with careful evaluation of sites it is inevitable that external environmental factors may shift and we might face concerns regarding a political or social issue in a given location. NCA remains committed to open and ethical dialogue about such issues. NCA's leadership is also committed to evaluating each situation and determining what steps, if any, can be taken to address particular situations in ways that will ensure a positive convention experience for as many of our members as possible.

Questions/ Comments

For any questions or concerns related to convention locations, please contact the National Office convention team at convention@natcom.org