

Guidelines for Convention Committee

Revised: October 2008

The Convention Committee is responsible for planning, organizing and providing a quality Annual Convention in conjunction with SGGEE's Annual General Meeting.

The objective is to plan ahead with a two to three year lead time for venues that partner every third year with another genealogy society. The Convention committee will hold discussions and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding the selection of a convention site city for the following year. The Board of Directors provides final approval and announces the chosen site during the Annual General Meeting.

Ideal Committee Organizational Structure Includes:

1. A Board Director appointed to the Convention Committee to liaise with and report to the Executive Committee, schedule and plan the Annual General Meeting under direction of the Board.
2. A Chairperson to develop and submit Financial Budgets for the upcoming year to the Director, and maintain financial records.
3. A Lead Coordinator (who could be same person as Chairperson) to lead discussions to determine City, Hotel/Convention Center and date of Convention.
4. Other coordinators to handle specific details
 - a. contracting with the Hotel or Convention center
 - b. arranging for speakers
 - c. handling of registrations (in cooperation with membership and finance committees)
5. A member from the Publicity Committee to promote the convention.
6. One or two persons to scout out venues for the next 2 or 3 years.

Responsibilities of the Convention Committee

1. Selecting a Chairperson from volunteers on the committee or appointed by the Board.
2. Determining the date and place of convention.
3. Selecting and contracting with the convention center.
4. Arranging for all necessary equipment.
5. Setting fees for the convention.
6. Arranging banquets where necessary.
7. Selecting and contracting speakers.
8. Coordinating with the Publicity committee to produce flyers, posters, media packages and website information.

Convention Set-up Details

1. City selection: A location where a significant number of SGGEE Members could attend without extensive travel, has good access by the major airlines and a strong concentration of people whose ancestors were of German origin from Poland and Volhynia.
2. Date selection: In the past the second weekend in August was chosen, but when partnering with another society, flexibility is needed and other months such as July should be considered.
3. Contracting with the convention center: Quotes should first be obtained from 2 or 3 potential convention centers. Reserving a site usually requires a 10% deposit. Funds can be obtained by cheque from the Treasurer or through the use a member's credit card with reimbursement from the Treasurer. The convention center should have the following available:
 - a. A room for lectures that can hold approximately 80-100 people with tables available to setup for audience note taking.
 - b. A room that is lockable overnight to serve as the "Research Room". We have found that a space of 48' x 30' is ample.
 - c. Banquet Room. This may be the same room used for lectures.
 - d. Obtain an equipment rental sheet. We normally require:
 - 1) a microphone on the podium or clip on microphone
 - 2) an 8' screen on tripod
 - 3) a small table by the podium
 - 4) a hand held microphone (for the Annual General Meeting)
 - 5) flip charts that may be needed by some speakers
 - e. Determine availability of Internet access, whether wireless or hardwire. SGGEE has a projector to be used with a laptop and plenty of power bars and extension cords.
 - f. Obtain Banquet menus and coffee/tea/juice break costs.
 - g. Determine taxes and gratuity fees being charged.
 - h. Reserve a block of rooms at the Hotel or convention center for convention attendees. (20-30 double occupancy rooms or more if necessary). Obtain clarification from Hotel whether SGGEE will be charged for rooms not booked by the cut off time.
Note: Most hotels will release the reserved rooms without charge.
 - i. Locate other hotels or accommodations within the immediate vicinity of the convention center.
4. Set convention registration fees. Calculate total cost of convention room rentals, coffee break expenses, equipment rentals, photocopy costs for speakers (usually maximum is \$50.00), the approximate number of paid dinners for speakers, etc. and divide by the estimated number of attendees, plus add 10%. A spreadsheet format is advisable. Fee schedules for previous years can be found in the Journals and used as a precedent. The convention should be self-supporting. Any profits revert to the general fund, and any losses are paid from general funds.
5. Banquet fees are usually at cost (which includes all taxes and gratuities).

6. Coordinate all advertising and promotion with the Publicity Committee. Develop an announcement, program agenda, registration form, flyer, and poster. E-mail and post necessary pages on the SGGEE website and forward necessary information to the Journal Editor for inclusion in the March, or June Journals or if possible both issues.
7. Select speakers and draft the Program Agenda. Contact all speakers two to four weeks prior to the convention date to confirm their attendance and equipment needs for their lecture(s).
8. Keep all financial records and provide information to the Finance committee. One member of the current convention committee should keep a record of the names of attendees, payments received, and banquet attendance. When SGGEE holds its own convention all registration forms and fees should be sent directly to the main SGGEE post office box in Calgary, Alberta.
9. It is advisable to keep a 5 year flow chart for future comparison showing actual expenditures that include the hotel prices, speakers banquet costs, fees for room rentals, equipment rentals, and monies paid to speakers (in lieu of their free registration and banquet costs). For planning purposes, this information should be passed on to the Convention Committee Chairperson for the following year.

Policy on payment to speakers:

Speakers will be offered tickets to the banquet and have their convention registration fees paid, for both themselves and their escort. At the discretion of the Convention Committee, a cash honorarium not to exceed \$200.00 may be given in lieu of the convention registration and banquet tickets.

The SGGEE Board or Executive Committee may, at the request of the Convention committee, approve the expenditures of additional funds to pay for the real costs and honorarium to allow for the retention of such guest speakers that would be of special or unusual benefit to SGGEE as a whole. It is understood that this clause is intended to allow for unique exceptions to the rule. It is not intended to be used on a regular, yearly basis, or to authorize special treatment for any one individual.

When we partner with another Society for a convention, many of the above issues will need to be revised to accommodate the specific needs for that convention.
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