

SERCYPAA Hotels 101: Hotel negotiation guidelines:

***DO NOT SEND THIS TO PROSPECTIVE HOTELS**

Hotel Location selection:

To find out if the hotel is viable you need to use your conference registration estimates to verify meeting space will hold enough people, that there is a ballroom big enough for main speaker meetings, that there is available meeting rooms for archives, SERCYPAA Advisory council, Panel rooms, Hospitality, etc.

**With that

Room block: *They should plan for SERCY to be roughly the size of your state conference. Do your research to find out how big your state conference has been in the past few years so you can have a more accurate estimate. Focus on national outreach.

For negotiation purposes it's better to start low. You can always negotiate for more room nights later on and get meeting space and other comps for free.

For small to medium estimates:

Start negotiations with 10-20 rooms on Thursday, 40-50 on Friday and Saturday.

For larger estimates: Can add 10 rooms to Friday and Saturday. Still want to start lower.

Room Rate:

We need to keep our guests in mind. Nothing Higher than 110. The cheaper the better here. Make sure to get complimentary triple and quad occupancy to avoid charges for extra people in your room.

Deposit for contract:

Have a plan for coming up with the deposit. Explain to the hotel when negotiating your deposit schedule and fees that the conference typically makes the majority of its money at conference, The goal is to minimize upfront deposit payment schedule maximizing the payments for after the conference is ideal. Best case scenario would be to negotiate getting final bill 30 days post conference.

Dates:

Historically SERCYPAA is a summer conference, with dates usually falling between may and august. Need to make sure your proposed dates don't conflict or fall within 30 days of any area, intergroup, district or state AA conferences or events. Also check for any posted dates for any large scale international or regional conferences.

Signing Date:

Your contract sign by date needs to be no earlier than 30 days after the SERCYPAA conference that you are bidding at. In other words no earlier than 30 days after being awarded the conference. For 2019 that means no earlier than July 2nd.

Negotiation points

Ask the hotel what their slow dates or slow season is. Example: give the hotel a 3 month window (after checking for conflicting area events) and ask when the slow dates would be to get a cheaper contract.

Requested Concessions:

Comped Room Ratio of preferably 40-1, but 50-1 is common.

These comped rooms can be used for speakers, since it expected in an effort to be fully supporting as a conference to cover travel and lodging for your main speakers.

Be sure to make sure that there are no resort fees, and parking costs for attendees is waived, or rolled into the cost of their room.

Coffee prices: anywhere between \$25-\$35 a gallon. If possible try to get the option of bringing in your own coffee which will save the host committee considerable funds.

Concession for hotel to honor the group room rate on shoulder dates, meaning 3 days pre and post conference guests can book rooms under the group rate.

Typically all food and beverage costs including coffee ad food and bev. minimums are charged what is commonly referred to as ++, which includes sales tax, service fees, gratuities etc. These usually add anywhere between 20-30% to the final bill and should be included when looking at total cost of contract,

Food and beverage minimums should be totally waived, or they should be dictated by a sliding scale: starting at the meeting of the attrition rate where food and beverage should be waived.

Attrition between 70% and 80%.

Meeting space rental fees should be waived and charges should be included in sliding scale based on meeting the attrition rate.

Banner hanging fees should be a waived.

Hotel should provide a count of hotel's chair inventory

Hotel will provide and setup Tables, Linens, Chairs, Easels, stage, podium, and Dance Floors from the hotel's inventory on a complimentary basis, without penalty or fee.

Complimentary Wireless Internet Access for up to 15 users in Group's Registration/Merchandise Areas and in the Advisory Council's boardroom over the event dates.

There needs to be a specific price listed in the contract that outline how much the hotel wants for electricity drop for DJ- typically about \$50

Ability to use a 3rd party or outside AV company

If they want to have a pool party, it needs to be in the contract. Group is allowed to have a DJ by poolside between certain hours. Doesn't need to be an exclusive or closed pool party, but all needs of committee should be addressed in contract- almost like a meeting room negotiation.

Never let the hotel know which or how many other hotels you are working with.

Don't commit to anything at the first meeting, and never take what they offer the first time.

Explain that SERCYPAA is a different kind of organization and that it's a two phase decision process. The better the hotel contract is, the more you will be able to be able to bring them a conference to host. Hold off on explaining that advisory will be stepping into negotiation, as they likely won't give you the best deal if they know that they will have to be coming back to the table later.

Be sure the hotel is aware that you are in a competitive bidding situation, and that location rarely factors into the site selection process.

Make sure that anything that is discussed is written down. In the hotel business a handshake is not enough. If it is not on paper it doesn't count.

Keep in mind the hotel's #1 concern is putting heads in beds. The Sales person's #1 concern is likely their commission, this means they will be incentivized to charge you extra for concessions.

One thing to look out for when reading your contract, make sure that there is no reference to *binding arbitration* mentioned anywhere in your contract. Non-binding mediation is ok, but any reference of binding arbitration needs to be removed.

If possible, we want (in most cases) the contract to include all of the meeting space in the hotel, and we want 24 access to those rooms.