

# AAHRA

## Annual Meeting and Convention Guidelines for the Convention Chair and Committees



This publication is intended to be a “work in progress” that is continually reviewed and updated so that the 1<sup>st</sup> time convention chairperson might have the benefit of his/her predecessors’ knowledge. Many thanks are given to the Administrative Practices Committee and all those who have participated and those who will participate in making this manual.

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# AAHRA Annual Meeting and Convention Guidelines For the Convention Chair and Committees

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

AAHRA Constitution and By-laws address the following issues regarding the Annual Meeting and Convention:

*“The Association shall hold an annual membership meeting each year at a time and place to be designated by the Board of Directors.”*

*“...the Convention and Exhibitors committees which will serve for three (3) years with one member rotating off each year and one member appointed each year. The three (3) year member will serve as Chairman....”*

No other issues are addressed in the Constitution and Bylaws. This document is designed to address issues that need Board approval and issues that must be addressed by the Convention Committee as they plan an Annual Meeting and Convention. The event should always be a cooperative effort between the current AAHRA President and Board, the Chairman of the Convention Committee, the other two members of the Convention Committee and the various committees appointed to do the work of the Annual Meeting and Convention. The Education Committee is also available to help with planning the education portion of the event and the scholarship board of AHAEEF should be consulted when planning the presentation of Scholarship awards. **However, the Chairman of the Convention Committee is the one person who must be the central point in coordinating all aspects of an Annual Meeting and Convention.** Delegation of duties is essential to a successful event but it is the responsibility of the Convention Chairman to make clear to everyone working on the event that all planning and implementation must be done through him/her.

## AAHRA BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Approve the site based on research and recommendations from the Site Selection Committee. This is generally done 2 – 3 years in advance of an Annual Meeting.
2. Approve line items in the annual budget regarding the Annual Meeting and Convention. Generally the Convention Chairman will be asked to consult with the current President and Treasurer in preparing the budget. The Convention Chair is responsible for informing Committee Chairs of budget restraints and following the budget guidelines.

3. Approve registration rates prior to issuing the Registration Packets for the Annual Meeting and Convention. This should be a part of the budget planning process.
4. Amenities provided to the current President as a part of the event. Common practice has been:
  - a. Provide free Registration to the President and their guests. This should be limited to a reasonable number of guests, usually three, or four. The guests should be persons not affiliated with any PHA.
  - b. Provide the equivalent of a hospitality suite plus up to two sleeping rooms for the days required for the Annual Meeting and Convention.
  - c. Hospitality functions in the President's suite during the Annual Meeting and Convention.

#### PREPARATION FOR BEING CONVENTION CHAIR:

1. Prior to the year you are Convention Chair, you need to request a copy of the hotel contract related to the year you will be chairman. The Treasurer commonly has an official copy of the signed hotel contract. If at the time you are appointed to the Convention Committee the site has not been selected, you may request the Site Selection Committee allow you to accompany them on the site visit of the hotel proposed for the year you will be Chairman. However, this is a courtesy that may be extended to you by the committee, not a requirement on the committee.
2. If you have not visited the hotel, it is practical to visit the site before you make detailed plans.
3. Once appointed to the Convention Committee you should be included in all the planning sessions and take the opportunity to learn the various aspects of putting on the Annual Meeting and Convention. Convention Chairman should be very careful to include the other two members of the committee and allow them the chance to learn what is required before the year they are Chairman.
4. At the end of each Annual Meeting and Convention a financial report should be prepared showing specifics of income and expenses, attendance, hotel rooms utilized, meeting space utilized, exhibitors, etc. from the meeting. This information needs to be made available to the Site Selection Committee and the upcoming Convention Chairs. This report needs to include the numbers guaranteed for meal events as well as the actual numbers who attended the meal events. You will have to specifically ask the hotel to provide you with the actual numbers for meal events. Be sure you ask for this information from the previous chair and prepare it for the following chair; it is essential in planning for the Annual Meeting and Convention.
5. The hotel contract sets specific deadlines for portions of the planning process. Be sure you note the dates and are able to comply with the deadlines. Some of the items include:

- a. Setting up the Master Account and/or paying the deposit – the Treasurer can help with this but it is the responsibility of the Convention Chair to be sure it is done.
  - b. Establishing dates and specific plans for pre-planning meetings
  - c. Attrition rates for the Room Block (*room blocks can be re-negotiated by the Convention Chair to some extent*)
  - d. Food event guarantees (*don't forget to consider tax and tips when calculating cost*).
  - e. Cancellation Policies
  - f. Cut off dates for room reservations
  - g. Guarantees for the amount of meeting space to be assigned to your meeting
6. The current AAHRA President establishes the theme for their year as President; this theme should be used as the Annual Meeting and Convention theme and needs to be set *very* early in the year. You need to meet with the President and discuss the theme and their ideas regarding translating it into the Annual Meeting and Convention. The President is not responsible for planning and implementation of the event, but it is their 'year' and they should be consulted and as involved in the planning progress as they want to be and as is practical.
- 7. *Be careful when you set your program schedule to not expand the time frame of the meeting. It cost money for the PHAs to send people down a day earlier than normal.***

#### ESTABLISHING ANNUAL MEETING AND CONVENTION COMMITTEES:

The President appoints the chairs of the various committees and unless it is a rotating committee, the Committee Chair usually appoints the other members of the committee. The Convention Chair may establish any needed committees not established by the President. The following list includes the generally established committees and their duties:

#### Working with the Various Committees

**REGISTRATION** | *The Registration Chair is appointed by AAHRA President; Registration Chair selects the remaining members of the Committee.*

1. Work with the AAHRA Webmaster to prepare and post registration packets on the AAHRA Webpage. Usually a state wide email notifies all PHAs that the information is available. The distribution date should be at least 3 months prior to the meeting date. These packets should be prepared using the theme selected by the President, approved by the Convention Chair and must contain the registration cost per category, hotel room reservation information, cut off dates for room reservations, information on the Golf Tournament, information on the scholarship fund raising events (if any), enough details on the Annual Meeting and Convention for the PHA EDs to determine who needs to attend the Annual Meeting and Convention, and information regarding events

planned so that the registrants will know appropriate dress and any special events planned (such as a costume event).

2. Receive and record registrations. In 2007 this process was converted to an on-line system. If you are not familiar with the system, you need to discuss this with the AAHRA Webmaster.
3. Maintain documentation as requested to keep the Convention Chair informed of registration status and report to the Treasurer so the income can be tracked.
4. Purchase everything needed for the registration packets. This includes the bags, goodies in the bags, nametags, badges, etc. Must stay within the budget allotted. Prepare the packets to be distributed at the Annual Meeting and Convention. Packets usually include the nametag, program, drink tickets, goodies, special information, etc... needed by the registrant. The Convention Chair will provide the program and should determine if and how drink tickets are to be distributed.
5. Receive list of Exhibitors and Professionals and with the cooperation of the Exhibits Chair, prepare appropriate information packets as noted above in #4 to be distributed to the Exhibitors and Professionals at the Annual Meeting and Convention.
6. Prepare prize drawing tickets as appropriate. Generally we have been printing 3 nametags, one is given to the registrant to wear, one is kept for the Door Prize drawing box, and one is kept for the Grand Prize drawing box. As the attendees register on site, for every paid delegate and guest that attends you put these two tickets in the appropriate prize drawing box. The boxes are given to the Exhibits Chairman.
7. Set up and implement the registration process at the Annual Meeting and Convention. Any decorations should match the theme as established by the President and should be cleared with the Convention Chair.
8. Collect prizes donated by attendees – give these to Exhibits Chair. Ensure PHA name is on the Door Prize.
9. Request reimbursement for any expense paid by the Registration Chair by submitting a detailed list of expenses incurred to the Convention Chair. When the expense is approved, the Treasurer will be instructed to make the reimbursement.
10. Provide progress reports to Convention Chair and prepare a Final Conference Report giving final numbers on registration. This final report should include registrations by category, total number of attendees and information showing any refunds requested or special circumstances regarding the registration process.

**Exhibits**

*Exhibits is Rotating Committee, AAHRA President appoints the 3<sup>rd</sup> member of the Committee, Chairman is the member who has been on the committee 3 years.*



*This committee also needs to have all three members very involved each year so that everyone gets trained in advance to do the necessary work.*

1. At least 3 months before the Annual Meeting date, prepare and distribute a notice to potential Exhibitors and Professionals that the registration packet is available on the AAHRA website. Prior year list is the starting point for the mail outs but new vendors should be added if possible. Work with the AAHRA webmaster to post the Registration Packet. The Registration packets should be prepared using the theme selected by the President, approved by the Convention Chair and must contain the registration cost per category, hotel room reservation information, information on the Golf Tournament, information on the scholarship fund raising events (if any), enough details on the Annual Meeting and Convention for the Vendors to participate in all of the events and to know when they need to man their booths and to know appropriate dress and any special events planned (such as a costume event).
2. Work with Registration to have on-site information packets ready for the Exhibitors and Professionals. Registration receives all information on the number of exhibitors and professionals that have completed the registration process therefore the Exhibit Chair must ask them to forward all contact information.
3. Confirmation should be sent to each registered Exhibitor and Professional to complete the registration process and acknowledge they are set to attend.
4. Exhibit Chair works with Convention Chair to provide exposure of vendors and professionals to the general membership. Usually all the Exhibitors and Professionals have an opportunity to be introduced in a session. The names and contact information for all Vendors are in the program and company names are exhibited either in the booths or hanging on the walls in Exhibit Hall. If the Exhibitors and Professionals are given an opportunity to introduce themselves at a session, they should all be asked to move to front of the room before the introductions begin, it takes too much time to let them walk from all over the room to the microphone.
5. Contract with a convention services company; approved by the Convention Chair, to set up the Exhibit Hall (we have used VEAL for many years). When contracting with the convention services company the Exhibit Chair should have a layout of the exhibit area from the hotel. The convention services company will provide a booth layout to the Exhibit Chair for approval. Booths are generally 8 x 10 and will have electrical connections at the request of the exhibitor. Booths should be organized in a manner to not have direct competitors situated next to each other and so that the flow of traffic moves freely through the exhibit hall.

The convention services company will also provide an information packet for services they can provide the Exhibitors such as: freight

handling, additional booth furnishings, installation, and dismantling of booths. The Exhibit Chair can forward this packet via email or provide the convention services company all Exhibitor contact information. The convention services company must be provided a final list of exhibitors and professionals no later than three weeks before the event start date.

Some exhibitors will have special requests to exhibit such items as lawnmowers, golf carts, etc. The Exhibit Chair should verify with the hotel what items are allowed in the Exhibit Area and notify any affected exhibitors of the hotel's restrictions. The Exhibit Chair should verify with the hotel the security (provided or not provided) of the Exhibit Area.

6. Responsible for prize drawings during various events. Convention Chair should inform Exhibits Chair of the times he/she needs to have prize drawings. Registration collects the donated prizes from PHAs and provides to Exhibits Chair, the Exhibits Chair collects prize donations from Vendors and Professionals. The Scholarship Fund Raising Committee will need prizes for the Scholarship Prize Drawing; the Exhibit Chair should contact the Scholarship Fund Raising Committee Chair to set aside the appropriate number of prizes. All drawings for prizes donated by PHAs and some of the prizes donated by vendors are done from the Door Prize drawing box and 'you must be present' to win. Once a name is drawn, the name does not go back into the box. Some vendors will want to have prize drawings from boxes they have at their booth. Exhibits Chair is responsible for coordinating this with the specific vendor. Usually, you do not have to be present to win a specific vendor prize drawn from their box, but it is up to the vendor. The Grand Prize drawing is done from a separate box and the name of every paid delegate and guest should be in that box. You must be present to win the Grand Prize. In the past we have had auctions during receptions as a fund raiser for the Scholarship program. You need to work with the Convention Chair and the Scholarship Fund Raising Committee regarding any such special events.
7. Responsible for "tear-down" of Exhibit Hall and coordinating with Exhibitors to meet the schedule established by the Convention Chair (*room is usually needed for other events*).

**Ushers** The Ushers *Chair is appointed by AAHRA President, Usher Chair recruits other members.*

1. Convention Chair must provide list of events he/she wants ushered. Usher Chair has ushers at each entrance to be sure no one without a nametag enters the room.
2. The common use of ushers is only at food events but Ushers could also be used as 'runners' as needed for such things as getting extra chairs set up, get hotel to adjust temperature, get copies made for speakers, etc.... Convention Chair assigns duties at his/her discretion. It is always a good idea to have someone assigned to assist the speakers and entertainers

while they are working.

**Hospitality** The Hospitality *Chair is appointed by AAHRA President, Hospitality Chair recruits other members.*

1. At the discretion of the AAHRA President handles any social functions specific to the President's suite.
2. Convention Chair could ask them to do other things; in the past this committee has been used to help plan the menu for food events.

**Education** The Education Committee is a *Rotating Committee, AAHRA President appoints the new member of the Committee, Chairman is the member who has been on the committee the longest.*

Convention Chair can use the Education Committee to help plan the education portion of the Annual Meeting and Convention. There is no "rule" regarding who plans the education portion of the meeting, but it should be a cooperative effort with the Convention Chairman communicating to the Education Chair how much help he/she wants with planning. Once again, it must be clear that all plans have to be coordinated through the Convention Chair and he/she must approve all cost associated with providing the education portion of the meeting.

**Scholarship** The Scholarship Board (Alabama Housing Authority Education Enrichment Fund "AHAEEF") – *This is a separate Board from AAHRA.* The scholarship awards presentation is a big part of our Annual Meeting and it has been common practice for several years to allow the Scholarship Board to plan the program for the Scholarship awards presentation ceremony. For many years this has been done at lunch on Tuesday of the Convention.

1. The Vice-President serves as "host/hostess" for the event. Usually welcomes attendees, introduces the person doing the invocation, and introduces the Chairman of the AHAEEF Board who then takes over the event. After the AHAEEF Board completes their program, there is usually a prize drawing, and the Vice-President could either announce that or the AHAEEF Chair could just turn the podium over to the Exhibits Chair.
2. AAHRA selects and pays for the meal and makes the necessary guarantees regarding numbers to attend the lunch.
3. AAHRA pays the cost of the guest speaker (within reason) and the audio/visual equipment needed for the presentation. If the Scholarship Board wants special decorations and/or speakers it must be approved by the Convention Chairman or the Scholarship Board must pay the expense for them. This has to be a cooperative effort with the Convention Chairman making sure the Scholarship Board understands that he/she must be aware of all plans for the event and any expense to be paid by AAHRA must be approved by him/her.
4. The Scholarship Board has the option of inviting all scholarship winners

to the event and AAHRA absorbs the cost of the meal for the scholarship winner and up to 2 guests per winner. If the winner wants to bring more guests we have allowed that in the past if someone else pays the cost of the meal. The winners are only invited to the Scholarship event. If they want to attend other parts of the Annual Meeting and Convention they must be registered for the meeting as a “guest.”

5. Plans have to be made to either have ‘guest’ nametags for the scholarship event attendees or they have to escorted into the room to be sure that only invited guest attend. Tables should be reserved at the front of the room to allow easy access to the stage area to receive the scholarships.
6. For many years we have had a fund raiser for the scholarship program with the \$5,000 raffle. There is an AAHRA appointed committee (Scholarship Fund Raising) to handle the raffle. The Registration Packet for Delegates and Exhibitors should have information regarding the raffle and tickets are sold on site. The Convention Chair must schedule time into the program for the raffle drawing and plan to accommodate the needs of the committee as they promote the raffle and do the prize drawing session(s).

#### **Decorations**

This is an *Optional Committee*; if the Convention Chair wants a decorating committee they can appoint the committee and assign all duties as desired.

Decorations over the years have gone from minimal to extravagant. It is fun to match the decorations to the current year theme but consideration must be given to the expense and time needed to do any elaborate decoration. It is at the discretion of the Convention Chair and budget ability as to how much or how little decorating is done in any given year. However, if decorations are to be a part of the Annual Meeting and Convention it is best to have a committee established before you arrive on site and to be clear as to what you expect from the committee. Hotels have rules regarding how decorations can be hung so it is always a good idea to speak to your hotel meeting planner before you order decorations.

#### **Golf**

The Golf Chair is appointed by the *AAHRA President*; the committee should consist of at least 2 people

Responsible for the Walter B. Mills Golf Tournament held in conjunction each year with the AAHRA Annual Meeting and Convention. Chairperson must coordinate with the Convention Committee Chair regarding location, timing, budget, and presentation of Golf awards, registration, and other aspects of the tournament. This needs to be at minimum a two-person committee with each member knowledgeable regarding the details of the event.

Major duties include securing the location for the event to be held usually the Monday of the AAHRA Annual Meeting and Convention; set up the tournament format which is a four (4) person scramble with the Chairman deciding what extras to add such as long drive, closest to the pin, number of mulligan’s that can be purchased and mulligan cost, etc; negotiate golf fees and guarantee golfer numbers with the course and determine whether or not lunch for the participants

will be included. After consultation with the Convention Chairperson the Chairman signs the contract with the course, secures prizes for the tournament, and decides how many places will receive prizes and what each one will receive. The Chairman is also responsible for making up the teams and assigning tee times, securing score cards and determining winning teams and giving out prizes.

**Resolution** The AAHRA President appoints the Resolutions Chair; the Chair recruits other members if needed. **Note:** The Resolutions Chair should begin soliciting resolutions 3 months prior to the convention date.

AAHRA uses the Annual Membership Business Meeting to honor people who have made significant contributions to AAHRA or our Membership. PHAs have the opportunity to request Resolutions be entered into the minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting in honor of Commissioners, staff members, or others who may have retired or passed away during the current year. The chairperson of this committee is responsible for making the membership aware of this opportunity in a timely manner prior to the Annual Meeting and Convention, the appropriate reasons for requesting resolutions, preparing the resolutions in a format that can be included in the minutes, and presenting an appropriate copy of the resolution to the honoree at the Annual Membership Meeting.

The Chair of this committee must coordinate with the AAHRA Webmaster to promote the process and coordinate with the AAHRA President to present the Resolutions at the Annual Membership Meeting. Cost of preparing the resolutions must be included in the Budget for the year and request for reimbursement must be approved by the President and submitted to the AAHRA Treasurer.

**Awards** AAHRA President appoints the Awards Chair and Committee Members. **Note:** The Awards Chair should begin the process of soliciting awards 6 months prior to the convention date.

The Awards Committee Chair is responsible for establishing the categories of awards to be presented in any given year with the current AAHRA President, promoting the awards process, soliciting entries in the various categories, coordinating judging the entries, notifying the winners and coordinating the presentation of awards. The Convention Committee Chair designates the time the ceremony will be held and the ceremony must be coordinated with them for theme, time frame needed and appropriateness. Cost of the actual award presented must be approved by the President/Board and the cost of the presentation event must be approved by the Convention Chair.

It can take several months to complete this process so it is important to begin promoting the Awards Program and to recruit your judges early.

The award categories, trophies, and cash award may be revised each year with the approval of the AAHRA Board but the typical award categories are listed below:

- I. Best Newsletter – Honors the best newsletter in the following categories. (Judging is based on the last 3 issues published in the past year and judged on overall quality of content, layout, and

design).

- a. Small PHA (1 - 499 units)
  - b. Medium PHA (500 – 1249 units)
  - c. Large PHA (1250 – units and over)
- II. Best Agency Publication – Honors the best agency publication (Judging is based on the last 3 issues published in the past year and judged on overall quality of content, layout, and design).
- a. Small PHA (1 – 499 units)
  - b. Medium PHA (500 – 1249 units)
  - c. Large PHA (1250 – units and over)
- III. AAHRA Best Practices (Honors outstanding programs or special achievements by a member agency.)
- IV. Commissioner of the Year (Honors a Commissioner currently serving on a member Board for at least one year and who made an outstanding contribution to the agency.)
- V. Administrative Employee of the Year (Honors a staff member currently employed by a member agency who has worked for at least one year and who has made an outstanding contribution to the agency).
- VI. Maintenance Employee of the Year (Honors a staff member currently employed by a member agency who has worked for at least one year and who has made an outstanding contribution to the agency).
- VII. Resident Volunteer of the Year (Honors a currently assisted resident of a member program who has been on the program for at least one year and has made an outstanding contribution to the agency).
- VIII. Executive Director of the Year (Honors an Executive Director who has made an outstanding contribution to the member agency).
- IX. President Lifetime Achievement Award (Honors an AAHRA individual who has given their time and talents to bring about change to our industry or has achieved outstanding accomplishments).

**Chaplain** The President appoints the Chaplain Chair.

Coordinates with the Convention Committee Chair times, dates and needs for each session. May solicit volunteers or do the prayer themselves.

## TIME LINES FOR PLANNING

Every Convention Chair will be different in the way they approach the planning and implementation of an Annual Meeting and Convention. Some things that should be considered:

1. There are a lot of people working on different parts of the Annual Meeting and Convention. You need to meet with them early in the process and let them know what you expect from them and give specific assignments for specific tasks.
2. You must plan the big events and know who must be booked as entertainment or speakers before you can set aside the meeting space needed for the various events. If your program will be large general sessions the set up will be very different than if you plan smaller consecutive education sessions. Your set up can have a major impact on how the hotel works to set up your events and can affect the time frames of your events.
3. Entertainment and speakers must be booked months in advance to be sure you get the people you want and so that you have time to negotiate the cost and stay within your budget.
4. The program has to be promoted in the Registration Packets and the Vendor Packets that go out at least 3 months prior to the Annual Meeting and Convention. EDs cannot determine which staff members to send unless they know what will be included in the education portion of the meeting. The program must include the participating exhibitors and professionals for us to adequately promote the vendor and make it worth his/her time and effort to attend.
5. If you want to have a special event (such as a costume party or formal event) you have to let your attendees know in advance so they can plan the appropriate dress.
6. Programs must go to the printer usually 6 weeks before the meeting date. Whoever is assigned to do the program must have time to select a printer, design the program, collect necessary pictures and information, and get it to the printer as required.
7. If you plan to use special decorations, they have to be ordered months in advance to be sure you get what you want or you have time to make alternative plans.
8. The hotel expects to have a detailed plan outlining the sessions, estimated numbers to attend each session, time frames for the various sessions, food and beverage plans for each session about 4 months in advance of the meeting. They expect a final plan at least thirty (30) days before the event. You need to talk to your hotel meeting planner to determine the exact dates this information is expected.
9. Once you have given the hotel a detailed plan of your program, request the hotel meeting planner provide you with event planning sheets so that you can be sure they have the plans specified as you outlined before you get to the hotel. The hotel meeting planner should have event sheets outlining every detail of the set up, menus, guarantees, cost, audio/visual, hotel provided decorations, etc. for you to review.
10. If you plan any reserve seating during food events or sessions, you must notify the people for whom you are reserving seats. They need to know specifically what event, where the



seating will be and you need some response to be sure you reserve enough seats but not too many. In the past reserve seating has been set aside for the President (for their staff, family, commissioners, etc), working members of committees, award winners, scholarship winners, and exhibitors/professionals (at sessions where they are on the program).

11. Complementary rooms must be set aside for the AAHRA President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Convention Chair as well as for guest speakers, entertainers, etc... The contract with the hotel will determine what rooms are complementary from the hotel and what rooms must be charged to the Master Account. This should be done as early as possible to avoid conflicts in the rooms you need in the room block.
12. The Convention Chair is responsible for approving all expenditures for the Annual Meeting and Convention. Be sure the hotel knows that the final bill should be mailed to you and that you will approve the bill and request the Treasurer to send payment to the hotel. Know when the payment is due so that you and the Treasurer can meet this deadline.

## PLANNING MEETINGS

The hotel contract will usually contain agreements regarding on-site planning meetings. You have to work with the current AAHRA President to determine how these on site meetings will be coordinated but here are some things to consider.

1. The initial planning session should be limited to the Convention Committee (all 3 members) and specific people the Convention Chair wants present at the meeting. The AAHRA President should be invited. The more people sitting in the room the less effective the meeting will be.
2. When plans are far enough along to make specific assignments, others should be invited to planning meetings. The Convention Chair should have a written draft of the program plans so that those present will understand the plans and understand what role they will play in the process.
3. Depending on how familiar you are with the hotel, on-site meeting(s) should be planned. If you want pictures from the meeting site in the program, you need to hold that meeting at least 3 months before the meeting date and inform those you want in the pictures of any specific dress code you want for the pictures.
4. It has been common practice to hold the Convention Committee Meetings in conjunction with the AAHRA Board Meetings, but keep in mind that the Convention Chair has the right to hold meetings as they desire so that real work can be accomplished.

5. The hotel meeting planner will need a detailed plan at least four (4) months before the meeting date so they can plan for meeting space, staffing, supplies, etc... Planning your on-site meeting to correspond with that date is an effective way to inform the hotel staff of your needs and introduce your committee members to the hotel staff they will be working with during the Annual Meeting and Convention.
6. When you arrive on-site for the Annual Meeting and Convention you will need to hold a pre-conference meeting with the hotel staff. You can usually schedule this the day before the event begins. This meeting should include all necessary people, but limit it to those who need to be present so that the discussion will stay focused on what you have planned. This is your last chance to make changes and be sure everything is planned as you want and that cost quoted matches what you agreed to in prior meetings. The hotel meeting planner should have event sheets outlining every detail of the set up, menus, guarantees, cost, audio/visual, hotel provided decorations, etc... for your review and approval. At this meeting, you need to establish a method of contacting the appropriate hotel staff member while on site if you have a problem. You also need to get keys to storage areas and assign the keys to your key committee members who must take responsibility for Door Prizes, decorations, registration, problem solving, etc...

## ON-SITE ISSUES

1. People always arrive after the Registration table has closed; you need to be prepared to handle these (*difficult*) people. Ushers need to know who to call, you or the Registration Chair if this issue comes up and how they can contact that person.
2. Speakers (especially non-paid speakers) sometimes don't show up. Think about how you can adjust your schedule to handle these changes.
3. The time line of the various sessions may be too long or too short. Think about how you can adjust your schedule to best meet the needs of keeping people at the meeting but not making them "stand in the hall" for extended periods. Have a plan to announce changes in the schedule if time problems occur.
4. People try to get into the food events without a nametag (some try to bring in children without a nametag). Discuss with your ushers how to handle this and be sure they understand the policy.
5. Who handles a particularly difficult person? Do you want the ushers to do this or do you want them to send that person to you?
6. If you have entertainment, will you allow people without a nametag to come in after the food service is complete? Inform your ushers.

7. Do you plan to have names on the head tables in front of the people seated on the head table? If yes, you must have the name plates printed before you arrive on site and have someone assigned to put the nameplates on the tables before the event.
8. People are constantly thirsty and you don't want to pay to have soft drinks available all the time, where do you need water stations set up?
9. People are notorious for taking the center pieces and decorations from the rooms. Are you planning to give away the decorations or do you need to plan to protect them either by announcing "do not remove decorations from the room" or having your ushers on guard?
10. Cell phones need to be turned off during all sessions; plan to make this request at each session.

At the end of each Annual Meeting and Convention a financial report should be prepared showing specifics of income and expenses, attendance, hotel rooms utilized, meeting space utilized, exhibitors, etc. from the meeting. This information needs to be made available to the Site Selection Committee and the upcoming Convention Chairs. This report needs to include the numbers guaranteed for meal events as well as the actual numbers who attended the meal events. You will have to specifically ask the hotel to provide you with the actual numbers for meal events. This information is essential in planning for future Annual Meeting and Conventions. The AAHRA Treasurer needs to be sure the information he/she has in the Accounting Records tie back to the dollars in your report.



AAHRA has been having Annual Meetings since about 1941. Many people have worked to plan the Annual Meetings and some meetings have been better (and worse) than others. Don't be afraid to be creative, just because it has been done that way in the past does not mean it has to be done that way this year. Many people want to work on the Annual Meeting and Convention but they want you to ask them to work, they don't want to just volunteer. Don't be afraid to delegate and trust your people to accomplish their task, but asking for progress reports is just a good way to do business, not interference with allowing someone else to do a job.

Every Annual Meeting and Convention creates 'challenges' but if you have set your plan and assigned people to work the plan you will see that your event can be an educational and fun event for our membership without being a heart attack for you!