Meeting Profile & Guidelines for Site Proposals for
NATIONAL CONVENTION

Organization, Member, and Meeting Profile

Vietnam Veterans of America is the only Congressionally chartered, not-for-profit veterans service organization devoted exclusively to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. Our 85,000 plus members are men and women that served in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War (1959-1975) as well as family members and the general public. The average age of our membership is 65 to 78 years. The majority are male, which accounts for a higher percentage of male attendees at our national meetings, although a number of women veterans attend, as well as female spouses, staff members and guest.

The majority of our members are affiliated with local chapters, of which there are approximately 800, in 47 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Chapters organize a variety of community service and self-help projects, including transitional housing and shelters for homeless veterans, speakers for local schools, scholarship programs, and assistance to local veterans, which have earned members respect and admiration from their communities.

Nationally, Vietnam Veterans of America advocates for the needs of its members through such programs as our legislative efforts in the U.S. Congress, our Service Representative Program, which provides assistance to veterans seeking federally mandated benefits and services from the government, through self-help guides on critical issues such as Agent Orange effects and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, through periodicals which inform and educate veterans and the public about the needs and concerns of Vietnam veterans, and through events such as our national meetings. Further information about our programs can be found in our home page at http://www.vva.org.

Convention Profile

Vietnam Veterans of American holds a national meeting each year in late summer, rotating back and forth between or National Conventions, held in odd number years, and our National Leadership Conferences, held in even numbered years.

Close to 1200 people attend our National Conventions over the course of five days. At these biennial business meetings, delegates selected by their local chapters elect our national leadership and decide our future goals, objectives, and directions, through debating and voting upon resolutions proposed by the chapters. The convention consists of daily general sessions, half day of committee “hearings”, 
evening caucuses of the members, and a number of educational seminars during non-plenary sessions time periods.

A number of catered events are held throughout the week, including a minimum of three breakfasts, a luncheon, and awards dinner Saturday evening. Additionally, on Tuesday night, the day before the Convention starts, we hold a "Welcome Home Party", a dance or concert. While our Convention is not a reunion, it is typical for our members to hang around the “social” areas of the hotel, such as a bar or lounge, often beyond the usual closing times. The host meeting site can expect very heavy usage of the bar/lounge areas, heavy coffee drinking, and busy food and beverage outlets. Historically, a centrally located “continental breakfast bar” and on the one or two busiest of the Convention business sessions, inexpensive cash food and beverage sales have been very busy and lucrative for the meeting site.

Meeting Site

A ballroom with a minimum of 18,000 square feet is required for the general session. This ballroom space must be on 24 hour hold. It can be turned on Saturday afternoon for use as the Banquet for Saturday night.

For both cost purposes and disabled member accessibility purposes, we prefer holding our convention in one property. However, we will consider cities where we would need to use a combination of hotels, or hotels with a convention center, if those cities are able to achieve fairly “equal footing” with one-property cities, with regard to overall cost and accessibility.

Our attendees prefer a location that is central and near the main hub of activity, thus an airport property will not work for us. In addition, some resort properties may not work for us due to cost considerations and the amount of meeting space our Convention requires.

Preferred Dates and Pattern

The preferred dates for our Convention are the middle of July to the Middle of August.

The Convention pattern is Monday (peak arrival) through Saturday, with peak departure on Sunday. Limited arrival begins on the previous Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, most staff arrive on Sunday, along with a number of our leaders.

Our Priority Issues in Selecting a Site
Among the members that attend our Convention are 10-12 disabled veterans. It is critical that there be enough fully accessible (meet Americans with Disabilities Act) sleeping rooms for the attendees who require them, and that the meeting site be fully accessible to all disabled persons.

Reasonable costs associated with attending the conference, including lower room rates, meal prices, travel, and other necessary costs, are very important for our attendees as well as the organization. As a not-for-profit, primarily volunteer organization, we are cost conscious, and budget driven.

Close proximity to local restaurants, shops, bars, tourist sites, and other local resources is very important to our members. Our members become unhappy and feel isolated without the ability to walk to local attractions and resources.

Site Selection Process

The convention site will be selected on the basis of a combination of factors, including which property best meets our needs, the quality and resources of the facility and surrounding area, the degree of accessibility for the disabled, and a variety of cost factors.

As this “request for proposal” package is being sent to the Convention and Visitors Bureaus of selected cities, we ask that the CVB’s manage the local response process.

One copy of the proposals should be sent to:

Wes Guidry, CMP  
Director of Meetings  
218 Jefferson Drive  
Lake Charles, LA 70605  
wesguidry@suddenlink.net

Phone 337/479-0525

Response packages will be reviewed by the meeting planner, after which a “first round” elimination will take place. The cities which best seem to fit our Convention criteria will comprise a “short list”, and will be contacted for further information and/or site visit scheduling. When the meeting planner has completed his assessment, he will select a city and present his decision at the next board meeting for approval.

We respectfully request that response proposals be as thorough as possible in providing the information we are seeking about your facilities and surrounding area.
**VVA Convention Bid Process**

1. **RFP**
   - A detailed Request for Proposal is prepared according to VVA needs.

2. **VVA**
   - RFP is put on web at ‘blind’ site.

3. **CVB**
   - Convention & Visitors Bureaus from selected cities are given the address of the RFP.
   - The CVB sends the RFP to Hotels that have the space to bid on the Convention.

4. **Hotels**
   - Hotels submit their proposals back to their Convention & Visitors Bureau.

5. **Conventions & Visitors Bureaus**
   - Convention & Visitors Bureau collects all proposals from the hotels and puts them into one city proposal.

6. **Final Proposal**
   - Final proposal is mailed to VVA’s Meeting Planner.

7. **VVA’s Meeting Planner**
   - VVA’s Meeting Planner reviews all proposals from all cities submitting.

8. **Selection**
   - After considering many factors, a ‘short list’ of potential sites is determined.

9. **CVB Representatives**
   - CVB representatives in the cities chosen are called and dates are chosen for site inspections of the hotels and the city.

10. **VVA Meeting Planner**
    - VVA Meeting Planner travels to selected cities.

11. **Cities Inspection**
    - Cities are inspected, looking for venues that fit our needs.

12. **Site Selection**
    - Choices are narrowed down, the VVA Board of Directors are presented the Meeting Planner’s recommendations.

**A Site is chosen and a contract is signed.**
MEETING REQUIREMENTS & REQUESTS

The following list provides our general needs and requests for our meeting, as well as information we are seeking about the hotel or facility. I ask that the responses to this RFP be as complete as possible so that I can properly evaluate your site for our meeting needs.

Having all questions answered is VERY important.

Feel free to just write your responses on this sheet. Answers are more important to me than neatness and presentation.

1. Total number of king, double-double, and any other sleeping room types. The number and type of suites.

2. Guaranteed room rate quoted (net/non-commissionable)

3. Current tax rate for sleeping room.

4. Total number of fully accessible sleeping rooms. (Rooms that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines). Will you be willing to hold all fully accessible rooms for our meeting?

5. Overall accessibility of facility; entrance, meeting rooms, food and beverage outlets, parking garage, and all other areas. Indicate any area that is not accessible by wheelchair.
6. Is there adequate meeting room space to fit our program needs?
   
   a. Is there rental, set-up, or other charges for meeting or function room space?
   
   b. If so, indicate total charges.
   
7. Will hotel honor group rate 3 days pre and post meeting dates?
   
8. Will hotel honor a 30 day cutoff date for reservations?
   
9. Information about airport transportation options and approximate costs. What is the distance (driving time) between the airport and hotel.
   
10. What is the hotel’s parking availability and costs to guests?
   
11. One (1) complimentary room per 40 room nights, calculated on a cumulative basis?
12. Availability of 15 staff rooms at discounted rate. Indicate proposed rate.

13. Complimentary one bedroom suites for our National Officers (total of 4) above 1/40 comp policy.

14. Up to twelve (12) complimentary (cumulative) room nights for on-site preplanning meetings. Not all of the rooms will be taken at one time. Will be used as visit needs arise. Group rates charged for remaining room nights needed prior to meeting. Based on hotel availability

   a. Complimentary use of meeting room (set conference style for 15) during preplanning meetings. (Based on hotel availability)

15. Will the hotel agree free wi-fi in sleeping rooms?

16. Request 24 hour hold on the following meeting space: on-site Offices, exhibitor area, media room, credential office, General session room, and election committee office.

17. Will the hotel agree to ramp stages where necessary to accommodate disabled individuals, at no charge to VVA?
18. Does the hotel have an audio-visual company and sufficient equipment in house?
   
a. What is the policy regarding VVA providing their own equipment, if desired?
   
b. What is the tap in fees if outside source used?

19. Will the hotel provide one microphone, at no cost, when requested for each meeting room set for 75 or more?

20. Request that the hotel’s access fee for local calls placed in VVA on-site offices be waived.

21. Information about any non-emergency repair work or renovations planned for facility within 6 months prior to meeting dates.

22. Shipping and storage policy.
23. Cost for vendor tabletop displays (table, chair, skirting).

   a. Is this a (one time charge) or (per day)?

24. Any union and/or exclusive service contracts?
Pickup pattern
NATIONAL CONVENTION

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VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

SUNDAY

All Day  Staff arrives

MONDAY

All Day  Setting up of VVA Offices  4 Offices
All Day  Setting up of Vendor/Info area  50 booths, lockable room

TUESDAY

8:00am - 5:30pm  Election Committee office opens  board room, lockable
12:00pm – 8:00pm  Vendor/Information area open
1:00pm – 9:00pm  Convention registration opens  registration desk
4:00pm – 5:00pm  new delegate briefing  theater 100
5:00pm –  5:00pm  National Board of Directors meeting  hollow sq 30, 50 theater
6:00pm – 7:00pm  AA meeting  casual set for 15
8:00pm  Candidate briefing  Theater for 100
6:00pm  Convention floor set-up  classroom for 900, riser head table, ramp front stage Observation section theater for 100 rear of room

7:00pm  Opening ceremony rehearsal
7:00pm  Regional Caucuses (if called by regional director)
        Region 1  theater 100
        Region 2  theater 200
WEDNESDAY, July 30, 2003

7:30am – 8:00am  New delegate briefing  theater 100
7:30am – 8:00am  Candidate briefing  theater 100
8:00am – 6:00pm  Election committee office open
8:00am – 4:30pm  Convention registration open
8:00am – 8:45am  Delegates enter convention floor
8:30am - 7:00pm  Vendor/information area open
9:00am – 12:00pm Convention opening session
12:00pm – 1:15pm  AVVA guest luncheon  rounds for 200
1:00pm – 2:30pm  Committee hearings on resolutions

- Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee  theater 100
- Minority Affairs Committee  theater 100
- POW/MIA Committee  theater 100
- PTSD and Substance abuse Committee  theater 100
- Veterans Benefits Committee  theater 100
- Veterans Incarcerated Committee  theater 100

2:30pm – 4:00pm  Committee hearings on resolutions

- ETBO Committee  theater 100
- Membership affairs committee  theater 100
- Public affairs committee  theater 100
- Veterans affairs committee  theater 100
- Women veterans committee  theater 100
- Homeless veterans committee  theater 100

4:00pm – 5:30pm  Committee hearings on resolutions

- Veterans initiative task force  theater 100
- Health care committee  theater 100

6:00pm – 7:00pm  Dinner (on your own)
6:00pm – 7:00pm  AA meeting  casual for 15
7:00pm – 9:00pm  Constitution committee hearing  theater 100
9:00pm – 11:00pm Regional caucuses (if called by regional director)
  • Region 1 theater 100
  • Region 2 theater 200
  • Region 3 theater 200
  • Region 4 theater 100
  • Region 5 theater 100
  • Region 6 theater 100
  • Region 7 theater 100
  • Region 8 theater 100
  • Region 9 theater 100

THURSDAY, July 31, 2003

7:00am – 8:00am New delegate briefing theater 100
7:30am – 8:45am Service Rep Breakfast rounds 100
8:30am – 7:00pm Vendor/information area open
9:00am - 12:00pm Convention general session
12:00am – 1:30pm Lunch (on your own)
1:30pm – 5:00pm Convention general session (continues)
6:00pm – 7:00pm AA meeting casual set for 15
9:00pm Regional caucuses (if called by regional director)
  • Region 1 theater 100
  • Region 2 theater 200
  • Region 3 theater 200
  • Region 4 theater 100
  • Region 5 theater 100
  • Region 6 theater 100
  • Region 7 theater 100
  • Region 8 theater 100
  • Region 9 theater 100

FRIDAY, August 1, 2003

7:00am – 8:30am POW/MIA Ceremony Set TBD
7:30am – 8:45am Women Veterans breakfast Rounds 100
7:00am - 11:00am VVA Election/Voting Set TBD
8:30am – 6:00pm Vendor/information area open
9:00am – 12:00pm Convention general session
12:00pm Recess of General Session
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:30am – 8:45am</td>
<td>Legislative coordinator breakfast</td>
<td>Rounds 100</td>
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<td>8:00am – 10:00am</td>
<td>VVA run-off election (if needed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30am – 1:00pm</td>
<td>Vendor/information area open</td>
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<td>10:00am – 12:00pm</td>
<td>Convention general session</td>
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<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>Lunch (on own)</td>
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<td>1:00pm – 6:00pm</td>
<td>Special presentations and events</td>
<td>Varied sets, TBD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Book signings</td>
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<td>• Autograph sessions</td>
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<td>• Author roundtables</td>
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<td>• Special entertainment</td>
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<td>• Off site trips</td>
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<td>4:30am – 5:30am</td>
<td>Catholic Mass</td>
<td>theater 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00pm – 7:45pm</td>
<td>Pre-banquet reception (cash bar)</td>
<td>ballroom foyer</td>
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<td>8:00pm – 12:00pm</td>
<td>Awards Banquet</td>
<td>Rounds for 900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug-95</td>
<td>CONV</td>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
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<td>Aug-96</td>
<td>CONF</td>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
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<td>CONV</td>
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** Even numbered years are smaller Leadership Conferences / Odd numbered years are Large Conventions
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>* $27,645 in F/B Catered Events</td>
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<td>Galt House</td>
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<td>*$76,388.84 F/B Catering $51,643 A/V $13,000 cash food sales</td>
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<td>*$45,414 F/B Catering; $9,024 cash food sales</td>
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<td>Davenport Marriott / Double Tree</td>
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