

Guide For Hosting A National Federal Prison Retirees Convention (Updated March, 2016)

This is only a guide. The goal is a successful FPRA convention.

There are two important basic rules to follow when planning a national convention.

For hotel rooms, only sign a contract stating the hotel will release unreserved hotel rooms on a date agreed upon by your hotel negotiator and hotel representative. Be certain your local chapter will NOT be charged for the rooms.

Decide the amount for the registration fee to be charged to all participants. (Registration fees can be used to pay for the food for the reception, door prizes, and other expenses.) Amounts charged for all planned activities, including meals, should cover the costs and Not be an expense to the local chapter. If there are any questions, contact the national president.

Getting Started

It will be very helpful if a member(s) of your local chapter attends or has attended a national convention. The local warden(s) of the institution(s) should be contacted about an institution tour. Dates should be decided. Conventions are usually held in June.

Responsibilities for planning the national convention will need to be delegated. The local president will be the chairperson for planning. National convention planning can be setup with a minimum amount of committees, or as many as the local president decides. These are suggested: registration committee, hotel and catering committee, social activities committee, and publications committee. The local president can serve as the chair for all committees or appoint a chairperson for each committee. Communication amongst committees is vital.

Registration Committee

Create the registration form. The registration form should tell the participant the dates of the convention and location. Requested participant information should be name of retiree(s), spouse/guest, street address, city, state, zip code, phone number, email address, and institution/office

from which the participant(s) retired. The registration form must tell the participant a dead line date for registration, who to make check payable to, mailing address, and who to contact with questions. (For a sample registration form contact the national president.) A refund date for cancellation should be included. All convention information should be published in two issues of the Reflections.

The registration committee should also be responsible for collecting the money. All funds should be posted on a master record for each event. All registration forms should be kept. A schedule is needed for individuals working the registration desk. Name tags should be made for each participant. A list of all convention attendees should be provided to the national president and a copy should be given to each attendee at registration.

Hotel and Catering Committee

Twelve to sixteen months prior to the convention is not too early to begin looking for hotel rooms, conference rooms, and catering. You will be negotiating for hotel accommodations, room(s) needed for registration, reception, business meeting, banquet and breakfast. Two committee members should be the contacts for the hotel. Provide names and phone numbers to the hotel for questions or concerns.

Contact a hotel which can meet the needs of the convention and provide a reasonable rate for the area. Ask to block no more than 50 rooms, with the guarantee unreserved rooms will be released and your local chapter will NOT be charged.

An area for registration must be secured. Rooms for the reception, business meeting, banquet, and breakfast should be negotiated. Also, catering for the reception, banquet and breakfast should be negotiated.

Equipment (PA system) and room setups should be discussed.

Be sure to get a hotel contact name and phone number to call for assistance if there is a problem.

Social Activities Committee

Wednesday Evening – Reception

Thursday – Institution Tour, FPRA BUSINESS MEETING, there may be other planned events

Friday – Planned activities/tours/golf with transportation provided, BANQUET

Saturday – Breakfast

This committee should be responsible for obtaining tickets for tours/activities, door prizes and goodie bags. If possible, door prizes are usually given at the Banquet and Breakfast.

Publications Committee

This committee ensures all convention information is finalized and sent to the national president for review prior to publishing in the newsletter. All convention information will appear in two issues of the Reflections.

After approval by the local chapter president, the committee will have the needed number of all forms and handouts typed, printed and/or copied for convention participants.

The Friday evening Banquet should have a printed program listing guest speakers, special guests, and acknowledge all contributors. (Speakers and entertainment is a local decision.)

Financial Assistance and Support

The national office of the Federal Prison Retirees Association (FPRA) may provide the host chapter up to \$1,500.00 to assist with the convention.

In the past, private correctional companies have donated money to help with the cost of hosting the convention. Contact the last hosting local chapter president for a list of companies who provided financial support and their letters of request.

Convention Tips from Previous Host Sites

Meet with warden to set time and date of institution tour, and later confirm this information.

Look for ways to stretch the convention dollar, rent vans instead of buses, and pickup door prizes early.

Assign duties in writing, communicate often with each other, and be sure person in charge knows status of duties. Setup a monthly meeting schedule.

Start looking for hotel rooms as soon as you decide to host a convention and build a good working relationship with the selected hotel. Remember convention information has to be published in two newsletters.

All final decisions should be made by the entire committee.