

Alternative Formats for the SoCAL Annual Conference

Traditional Hotel Model

Each hotel is different (see table below), so beginning the hotel selection process and negotiations 2 years in advance both establishes a relationship with hotel sales staff, and also helps to secure the best price and benefits package.

Preliminary Hotel Totals (not actual)	Torrance Marriott RB	DoubleTree Carson	DoubleTree San Pedro	Crowne Plaza LA Harbor	LAX Marriott
Guest Room Rate	\$149.00	\$149.00	\$139.00	\$135.00	\$149.00
Self Parking (Overnight)	\$12/night	Complimentary	Complimentary	\$5/night	\$24/night
Self Parking (Day)	\$12/day	Complimentary	Complimentary	\$5/day	\$24/day
Guest Room Total (with tax & parking)	\$18,510.50	\$16,251.43	\$16,054.50	\$15,735.00	\$20,832.00
Meeting Spaces	Waived w/ 90%	Waived w/ 80%	\$5,100.00	Waived w/ 90%	Waived w/ 90%
Meeting Spaces Total (with fees)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,783.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
BEO* Minimum	\$10,000.00	\$5,100.00	\$6,200.00	\$7,200.00	\$10,000.00
BEO Tax & Service	9+24=33%	9+21=30%	9+24=33%	9+21=30%	9+0=9%
BEO Minimum Total (w/ fees)	\$13,300.00	\$6,630.00	\$8,246.00	\$7,200.00	\$10,900.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$31,810.50	\$22,881.43	\$31,083.50	\$25,095.00	\$31,732.00

There are other factors that do depend on location, e.g., estimated number of sleeping rooms (150 in Desert, 112 in San Diego, and 73 in Los Angeles).

Hotel Considerations	Challenges (some figures from 2011-2017 conferences)	Creative cost-cutting solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3- or 4-star resort-like hotel experience • Desirable location with all conference activities under 1 roof • Shuttle/nearby shopping centers • \$99-\$149 sleeping room rate • Complimentary or \$5-\$24/day parking • Meeting room space cost for 100-250 attendees • \$5k-\$10k food and beverage (BEO*) minimums • Need to manage deadlines, e.g., rates increase if booked past a certain date • Need to maximize amenities/ concessions, aka highlights/freebies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing what the conference needs are year after year, in order to ask for them; e.g., as few as 20 sleeping rooms are possible. • Budgeted registrants short by 10-20% (106 of 200) • Short of BEO minimums (\$1,700 of \$10k) • Exceeding BEO min/budget (\$8,310 vs \$6,500) • Full charges for partial day use of meeting space • Expensive ice cream social (\$1,633 vs \$600 budget) • High printing costs (\$1,844 vs \$575 budget) • Unplanned costs, e.g. (estimated) \$400 hospitality and \$400 recording vendor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange meals at nearby restaurants for Saturday lunch and dinner • Reserve sleeping rooms at nearby, less-expensive hotels and use the primary hotel for meeting space • Negotiate no food and beverage minimums and potentially no sleeping rooms • Reorganize the conference schedule to a 2-day format • What are your suggestions?

Model at High School Venue

School boards rent their facilities to churches, community colleges, and corporate groups when classes are not in session. A local high school may present a cost-effective alternative for our annual SoCal Regional Conferences.

To estimate fees using the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) Civic Center Rate Schedule, a sample SoCal Regional Conference program was developed. ***This was for example only*** and assumed the following:

- Participants stay only one night (no hotel room blocks reserved)
- The SoCal Regional Board Meeting and Assembly meeting take place on the same day
- Potluck lunch on Saturday
- Dinner and entertainment onsite or offsite on Saturday evening
- Boxed lunches on Sunday
- 3 keynote speakers in cafeteria (need to rent/borrow A/V equipment)
- 16 workshops of 90 minutes each
- Marathon meetings
- Hospitality "suite"; i.e., classroom

Based on the SDUSD Civic Center Rate Schedule, we would pay about \$4000 for cafeteria, classrooms, and parking lot rental, versus more than \$5,000 at one of the L.A. venues in the traditional hotel option. We would also pay for food and beverages in the school option, apart from the hospitality suite. Here are estimated costs:

Facility use (cafeteria, classrooms, parking lot):	\$3872.00
Additional fees (permit, insurance, A/V equipment rental):	<u>\$1210.00</u>
	\$5082.00

To estimate meals, two caterers and two restaurants were contacted for quotes on the Saturday dinner. The caterers would be less expensive and would serve dinner onsite in the school cafeteria. The SDUSD Civic Center Rate Schedule also requires a food service staff member to be present to ensure food safety. The restaurants would offer a change of pace and more interesting atmosphere at a higher cost. No alcohol was included in the dinner estimates.

Saturday caterers, per person:	\$15.48 – 22.00
Per 150 persons:	\$2,322.00 – \$3,300.00
Food service staff 3 hours:	\$126.00

Saturday restaurants, per person:	\$29.59 – \$76.87
Per 150 persons:	\$4,438.50 – \$11,530.50

In addition, estimates were obtained from two chains to cater typical pastry/bagel/coffee breakfasts and assorted box lunches for Sunday breakfast, both served onsite in the school cafeteria.

Sunday breakfast, per person:	\$6.68 – \$8.92
Per 150 persons:	\$1,002.00 – \$1,338.00
Food service staff 2 hours:	\$84.00

One Day “Mini-Conference” model

In this model, different **local intergroups each host a one-day ‘mini-conference’ for a total of four ‘mini-conferences’ throughout the year.** The mini-conferences can follow a general format, but the intergroup/planning committee has autonomy to set the format (eg the number and length of workshops, any ‘key note’ speaker, meals provided or not). One standard component is for the **regional business meeting/assembly to be held during lunchtime** & conference attendees then have the option of attending the regional meeting/assembly.

Estimations	St Luke Church	South Park Community Rm	Congregational Church Rec Rm	Lakeview Business Ctr
Rental Fees	\$1000.00	\$2800.00	\$1500.00	\$6000.00
Food/Snacks	Cold lunch \$1500.00	Cold lunch \$1500.00	Hot lunch \$3000.00	Only Snacks \$400
Supplies/Misc	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500
Meeting room occupancy	Large room (200)	Large room (180) 2 mid rooms (60)	Rec room (250) 3 small rooms (20)	Large room (250) 3 mid rooms (80)
Total Cost	\$3000.00	\$4800.00	\$5000.00	\$6900.00
Charge to cover costs if 150 attendees	150 attendees @ \$20	150 attendees @ \$32	150 attendees @ \$35	150 attendees @ \$46

Community Room Considerations	Potential Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need sufficient space and chairs for anticipated number of attendees (eg 100-250 people) • Type of conference activities may be limited by available space (eg availability and size of 'break out' rooms) • Parking & Public Transit options • Liability insurance required by facility? • Food considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearby, affordable eateries • Serving/eating space if food provided onsite • Space for a lunch business meeting? • Availability of AV equipment? Microphone for addressing large group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning level-of-difficulty and necessary lead time is much lower than for 3-day hotel conference • May encourage more local attendance as a one-day event • Holding regional business meeting during lunch may increase awareness of service work amongst fellowship • Regional committee members who may have to travel a long distance for the business meeting can also attend the conference • Hosting intergroups can anticipate planning at least one mini-conference a year; if same format/location year-to-year, could be very easy for inexperienced members to take on planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-day event may lead to lower number of out-of-town attendees • Rotating location of regional business meeting may mean less consistent attendance by committee members • In addition to four quarterly meetings, SoCal's annual assembly also needs to be accommodated • Back up plan for if an intergroup doesn't 'step up' to plan? • SoCal regional business meetings currently tend to run appx 3 hours which doesn't fit "lunch time" meeting concept • If not exactly four intergroups, consensus over hosting each quarter could be more challenging

Retreat Model

LACC hosted a retreat called "Road to Recovery" in 2014. It was a 3 day event... beginning on Friday and continuing until Sunday. The retreat was held at a beautiful campsite out in Malibu that belongs to Wilshire Blvd. Temple. This model is rewarding for those that like to "rough it" in a campsite like setting and can participate in weekend workshops and activities. Over the weekend there are activities workshops and speakers. It is a model for which a minimal amount of registration - \$150 covers lodging, food and all activities.

Retreat Totals	Total Cash Receipts - \$15,000
Registration Lodging, parking, food included	Early registration \$150 For 12 to a room/cabin Late registration \$175 Early registration fee for private room (2 to a room) was \$200 Amount given to Wilshire Blvd. Temple - \$13,000 (\$1000 donated in scholarship funds)
Meeting Spaces	Meeting spaces part of campsite – meeting room as well as side rooms
Workshop supplies, decorations, etc	\$1000
Net proceeds returned to LA CoDA	\$1000

Retreat Site Considerations	Challenges	Creative cost-cutting solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desirable location with all conference activities under 1 roof • Meeting room space cost for as many people as possible Need to maximize amenities/ concessions, aka highlights/freebies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing what the conference needs are year after year, in order to ask for them; • Drop in" attendees permitted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganize the conference schedule to a 2-day format • What are your suggestions?