

Memorandum

To: ROPA Delegates
From: ROPA Executive Board
Date: April 1, 2006
Re: **Guidelines for Proposals to Host a ROPA Conference**

Orchestras interested in hosting the next ROPA Conference will be given time for a short presentation at this Conference. We suggest you provide a hotel brochure(s), showing the conference facilities, with your presentation.

Official Invitation and Commitment. The official invitation to host the annual ROPA conference must come from the member orchestra's committee. The invitation should include a commitment from the orchestra committee to

- 1) have a substantial percentage of the orchestra attend at least one session of the conference;
- 2) assist in putting on a public labor event if local circumstances make that desirable; and
- 3) have a corps of volunteers to help before, during, and after the conference.

Communication. It is essential that the conference host/coordinator and hotel be online and accessible by e-mail.

Basics. The hotel should be a union hotel if possible. The location of the hotel should be central or near sites of interest to attendees; if not central, the location must not interfere with the commitments noted above.

Ground transport from airport to hotel should be convenient and reasonably priced. Adequate parking is needed. It is important that the Conference hotel not be undergoing any construction during the conference and is not near any construction or other unusually loud noises; the hotel should check with appropriate agencies to be sure that no construction is planned for the time the conference will be in session. Access to food around the clock is advisable, especially for breakfast. Attendees may also need a place that can provide quick lunches; buffets often work best. A dedicated high-speed Internet connection at the hotel is a plus. A fitness facility is desirable but not essential.

Guest rooms. The hotel should have an adequate number of rooms, reasonably priced (preferably under \$100 before any local taxes), to accommodate all attendees. About 100 people customarily attend on official business, and family members and others usually push the total to 120. Executive Board members arrive early and leave late in order to attend pre- and post-conference meetings. Some speakers and special guests may attend only briefly in the middle of the conference. Hotel reservations may be handled by the conference host/coordinator or by a travel agent; this will affect room rates and should be decided at the time of the proposal. It is important to determine whether or not the rate is commissionable in the event a travel agent is used to book the reservations. The cutoff date for reservations is usually mid-July. The ROPA President has often received a complimentary suite, tied to the guest-room guarantee. Guest rooms should have data ports for Internet access.

Conference Room. The conference room should seat 100 people comfortably, preferably with classroom seating for everyone, i.e., chairs at tables facing a dais. This usually requires at least 2000 square feet. Sightlines should be unobstructed; watch out for columns and irregular walls. The room should not be adjacent to a kitchen, to construction, or to another noisy room; a room that is separated from another room by a thin wall or movable partition should be avoided. Electrical outlets should be sufficiently plentiful that power strips can be plugged in for computers, tape recorders, and other equipment. Center and side aisles should allow easy and unobtrusive entrances and exits. An exit close to the head table is also desirable. The conference room should be exclusively for ROPA's use during the conference and available for general sessions, large caucuses, and workshops. The room should be well ventilated and comfortably air-conditioned (neither stuffy nor overly cool).

Audio-Visual Needs. Participants should be able to hear each other when they speak, and that usually requires a sound system, either in-house or rented, with microphones easily accessed. A good relationship with the hotel or outside vendor must be developed. Other needs like overhead projectors and flipcharts should be readily available.

Executive Board Meeting Room. The Executive Board needs a room where up to 16 people can be seated comfortably for special meetings at certain specified times. The full executive board (12) and legal counsel (1) meet before the Conference and following the adjournment of the Conference. The room may also be needed for other meetings during the conference. Coffee, tea, juice, soft drinks and catered buffet-style deli meals are usually provided during meetings, although simply ordering from room service during meetings is an alternative. Recent practice has been to use the President's suite as the Executive Board meeting room, if suitable.

Office. A room near the conference room is needed for office supplies and paper distribution. Office equipment appliances (computer, printer, copier) require suitable outlets. It is essential to have a network-capable laser printer in the office; a setup must be secured from a local vendor who can provide maintenance if needed. Paper distribution is usually done using mailboxes owned by ROPA.

Hospitality suite. A large comfortable room where delegates can meet informally is customary. The room should have a refrigerator. ROPA should be allowed to stock the room with drinks and snacks, but the hotel may require that its own food and beverage service be used. In either case, the host and volunteers should see that the room remains stocked.

Catering. Beverage service should be available at reasonable cost. Coffee (regular and decaffeinated), tea (hot water and teabags), and fruit juices should be available near the conference room during all general sessions.

Meetings of the governing board and other small groups may require a catered meal; buffet deli-style meals work best.

Copying. Provision must be made to expedite copy work through a nearby local copy shop, or to rent a copy machine for the Conference Office, to be used by the Executive Board. ROPA has a corporate account with Kinko's, a 24/7 full-service copy shop. Hotel business centers are often expensive and can get crowded.

Social Event. There is usually some social event held in conjunction with the Conference. Recent practice has been for ROPA to underwrite this event, but help from the orchestra musicians and/or the Local union is traditional and welcomed.