



National Federation of Democratic Women (NFDW)
Convention Guide
Overview

NFDW President

NFDW Officers and Board

National Convention Chair (CC)

Host State President

Host State Sub-Committees

NFDW President

- **Approve the bid, with the Board and convention body, two years in advance of proposed convention**
- **Appoint a National Convention Chair after consultation with Host State**
- **Together with the board, approve facility, convention dates and all contracts**
- **Approve all general plans for convention**
- **Confer with Convention Chair on program and approve it**
- **Secure speakers¹**
- **Invite major speakers**
- **Provide Convention Chair with information about speakers**
- **Prepare agenda for business sessions**
- **Issue Call to Convention**
- **Send all information to Newsletter Editor and Webmaster in time for State Presidents to receive it 45 days before convention**
- **Preside at all sessions of the convention and recess each session**
- **Open every session at announced time**
- **Appoint a Editing Committee to review convention minutes and return them with corrections within ten days for inclusion in file for distribution to each State delegation at next convention**
- **Write thank you letters to speakers and Host State President**
- **Provide thank you gifts to major speakers**
- **Receive post convention report and place it in permanent file**

¹ *No fees are paid, travel expense is paid for speakers only, and one night's lodging if the speaker is not local. Speakers have been known to arrive with an entourage. The initial letter from the NFDW President and any following letters should make it clear that transportation, hotel and meals are paid for speakers only. Do not use the term "we pay your expenses" and inform speakers that the hotel will ask them for a major credit card to secure "incidentals", i.e. phone charges, room service, etc.*

NFDW Treasurer
(Accountable to NFDW Board)

- **Sends an advance check to the host convention account, if requested**
- **Sends a list of paid members and States to Registration Chair**
- **Assists Convention Treasurer in preparing a budget, if requested**
- **Prepares an Annual Report for the Board**

NFDW Secretary
(Accountable to NFDW Board)

- **Records business sessions to be retained as official record**
- **Prepares written minutes of business sessions, including topics discussed and major motions and their disposition, and sends to President within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the convention**
- **Provides NFDW stationery to the Host State President for use on all convention communications**

NFDW Public Relations Chair
(Accountable to NFDW Board)

- **Collaborates with Host Publicity person for maximum media coverage**
- **Arranges network news interviews and national coverage**

NFDW Newsletter Editor
(Accountable to NFDW Board)

- **Prints and mails “Call to Convention” in time to be received 45 days prior to the convention**

- **Publishes Nominating Committee's report in election years, including biographies of nominees in the "Call to Convention" issue**

Regional Directors
(Accountable to NFDW Board)

- **Assist State Presidents in getting delegates to the national convention**
- **Hold regional meeting at the convention**
 1. **makes arrangements, in advance, with Convention Chair for meeting room, time, etc.**
 2. **prepares meeting agenda and plans after conferring with National President**

State Presidents
(Accountable to State membership)

- **Notify every club in the State at least 30 days prior to the convention**
- **Act as Chair of the State's delegation or appoint a Chair who will bring the convention information back to the State for its members**

Host State President
(Accountable to NFDW President and her State membership)

- **Sends the NFDW President notice of intent to offer bid as soon as approved by the State organization/site club**
- **Works with all members who may assist in finding donors for momentos, souvenirs, small gifts (memo pads, pens, etc.), door prizes, refreshments for host hospitality room, etc.**
- **Directs Recording Secretary to provide Convention Chair with an updated list of the State's federated Club Presidents and State Executive Board members**
- **Directs all convention chairpersons to use NFDW stationery when writing correspondence for the convention**

- **Encourages members to bring families and friends to the convention**
- **Confers with the NFDW President and makes recommendations for the Convention Chair when the bid is made.**
- **Confers with and assists the Convention Chair as necessary and requested**
- **Appoints a Convention Treasurer in conjunction with the Convention Chair**
- **Assists the NFDW Public Relations Chair, local publicity person, and Convention Chair to achieve maximum media coverage**
- **Assists the Convention Chair and NFDW Resolutions Committee with courtesy resolution**
- **Assists the Convention Chair with sending the NFDW President all information for the convention call, i.e. dates, times, places, a brief outline of program and participants including specific directions to facility, parking fees, etc., deadlines for registration and cancellation, name, address and phone number of Registration Chair and hotel information**
- **Has the designated committee prepare and send out formal invitation and registration packet to all State Presidents at least 45 days in advance of the convention**
- **Acts as Chief Host at designated hotel**
- **Assists the Convention Chair with a final report including recommendations to the NFDW President and Board for effectuating the next convention**
- **Writes thank you letters to the hotel, all firms and individuals who contributed and program participants**

How Do I Make A Bid For A Convention?

- **The State Federation and potential site club should meet to discuss the possibility and ramifications of hosting a national convention. This meeting should take place at least a year prior to the intended bid date**
- **The potential host State President should contact the NFDW President and Executive Board with a statement of intent to bid**
- **The potential host State should prepare a formal presentation to make its bid at the next national convention**
- **A delegation, led by the State President, is traditionally invited to present the formal bid to the Executive Board when an annual convention is in session**
- **The Executive Board notifies the convention body of the bids that have been received to host the national convention and its recommendations**
- **The potential host State is invited to present to the convention body at the national convention prior to the proposed convention year**

Helpful Hints to Follow When Considering Making a Convention Bid

- **A major airport MUST be easily accessible to the convention site**
- **The convention hotel should be union, if possible**
- **Room rates should include single and double**
- **The hotel should be near the airport and/or offer a courtesy van or transportation from/to the airport²**
- **If you can obtain a video of the host site to present to the National Board, do so – a picture is worth a thousand words**
- **If a website for the host site is available, let everyone know**
- **The host site hotel should be clean and have general services with amenities such as in-room coffee pots, irons, ironing boards, and safes**
- **Public transportation and parking are important factors when choosing your host site**
- **The hotel should have an office center and copy services, however, each is at the expense of the NFDW**
- **The convention MUST be self-sustaining and all costs over budget must be paid by the host state**

² Transportation to and from the airport is at the expense of the registrant

Wow, We Got the Bid, Now What?

Congratulations, you are now hosting the next NFDW National Convention. Your efforts thus far have provided your State organization the opportunity to shine in the spotlight. However, there is lots of work to be done before that can happen so here are some helpful tips on how to get started.

The Host State President and Convention Chair (and, yes, it can be the same person holding both positions) should call a meeting of her officers and board to establish criteria for making the event successful. The officers and board form a “Core Group” of reliable people within the organization and assign them committee tasks. At the very least, the Core Group should cover the following areas:

**Convention Treasurer
State Publicity Chair
Registration and Credentials Chair
Delegate’s Folder Chair
Program Chair
Pages and Doorkeepers Chair
Decorations Chair**

You also have to establish a policy on cancellations and refunds for registrants. The NFDW President can advise you on past protocol.

Let’s outline what each of the above-named Committee Chairs are responsible for:

Convention Treasurer

- **This can be the State Treasurer or you can appoint another individual**
- **She is responsible for all monies received for registration, tours, donations, etc.**
- **She should set up a separate convention bank account requiring two signatures**
- **She should keep separate lists of registration money, tour money, donations money – it will make her job easier when a final report has to be compiled**
- **She is responsible for sending deposits to vendors, etc.**

- **She should be keeping a list of income vs. expenses from the very beginning so that a preliminary report can be given to the NFDW officers and board at the end of the convention**
- **She is responsible for providing the Host President/Convention Chair with a detailed convention report not later than 55 days after the convention ends**

State Publicity Chair

- **Ask yourself, is there someone within the organization who deals with the media on a regular basis?**
- **Choose someone who will have a good rapport with the press**
- **Don't be discouraged if your local media outlets are less than responsive to a request – be persistent**
- **Your State Publicity Chair should have access to a separate interview area in the event a journalist wants to cover the convention or ask questions of the Convention Chair**
- **She should also have access to a computer (laptop is fine), printer, internet, and copier**

Registration and Credentials Chair

- **One of the hardest jobs is that of the Registration and Credentials Chair – choose wisely**
- **Your choice should be someone who is organized and responsible**
- **She will receive the registrations by mail and deliver the registration checks to the appointed Convention Treasurer**
- **She will keep a database of all registrants and provide it on a regular basis to the Convention Chair**
- **She will receive participants' tour registrations and deliver the tour checks to the appointed Convention Treasurer**
- **She will notify a participant if they send in the incorrect amount of money and issue refunds**
- **She will provide the credentials worn by the convention participants using her database of names and states**

Delegate Folder Chair

- **The Convention Chair will work in cooperation with the NFDW President to establish what will be put into the packet**
- **The Convention Chair shall coordinate with the Delegate Folder Chair just what the delegate will receive in her packet of information**

- **The packets of information provided to each delegate upon registering on-site shall include the NFDW By-laws, lists of officers, board and regional directors**
- **The Delegate Folder Chair will establish an efficient system of distributing the folders**

Program Chair

- **The Program Chair shall work with the NFDW President in selecting speakers**
- **Lunch and dinner are the time to showcase your State's dignitaries – they will appreciate the opportunity to address such an illustrious group**
- **The Program Chair will coordinate all three days of programming for the souvenir book**
- **She will also be the point person for speakers to contact**

Pages and Doorkeepers Chair

- **Your Chairperson should be someone who has contact with young Democratic women via your State's Young Dems movement, college Democratic clubs, or educational institutions**
- **Young Democratic women interested in helping should be encouraged to do so and this is the perfect place to utilize their talents (not to mention their youthfulness)**
- **They can be assigned to accompany a named speaker, distribute materials at general sessions, etc.**

Decorations Chair

- **After you have chosen the theme of your breakfasts, lunches and dinners, you'll want the room to reflect your ideas**
- **The Decorations Chair should have some experience in being creative, especially with centerpieces**
- **She should work closely with the Convention Chair**
- **She should have a working group and a designated work area at the host site to finalize all of the room plans**

The Core Group

- **Core Group members are not necessarily officers or board members, they are just committed individuals who have a strong desire to help**
- **Once you establish your Core Group of reliable and responsible women, meet at least once a month for the first year**
- **At your monthly meeting you can discuss the plans for your upcoming convention and brainstorm on ideas**
- **After the first year, you may find it necessary to meet twice a month and then, as you get closer to the actual convention date, once a week**
- **Core Group members can be utilized to work with Committee Chairs in their area of expertise**

What and Who Do I Write To?

Attached are sample letters used at a recent convention. You can adapt them to your own situation. Remember, they are just a guideline.

It is imperative to remember to use National Federation of Democratic Women stationery when corresponding with individuals and companies for the convention.

Enjoy!

Hosting a national convention is hectic, overwhelming at times, but a great sense of accomplishment and pride when it is finished. Enjoy your time in the spotlight and good luck!