

EVENT LOCATION: QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

In principle and in practice, ASAE values and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of association management. ASAE opposes all legislation that permits discrimination or seeks to limit existing protections for all. This position extends to state legislation that would preempt existing local non-discrimination ordinances and/or restrict equal access to public accommodations. In choosing destinations to host meetings or events, ASAE looks closely at whether there are municipal non-discrimination ordinances in place to ensure that ASAE attendees feel welcome and safe in a host city. ASAE also opposes legislation and/or policies that permit individuals and businesses to deny services to anyone based on religious or moral convictions. ASAE supports federal legislation to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

—ASAE Board Approved Issue Statement

This document is intended to serve as a framework for informing ASAE board decisions when addressing legislation counter to organizations' values in future meeting sites.

INFORMATION GATHERING ON SPECIFIC LEGISLATION/POLICY PRIOR TO ACTING

When an issue has been flagged in a location for an upcoming or potential meeting, how can an association determine the role the local jurisdiction is playing in the issue?

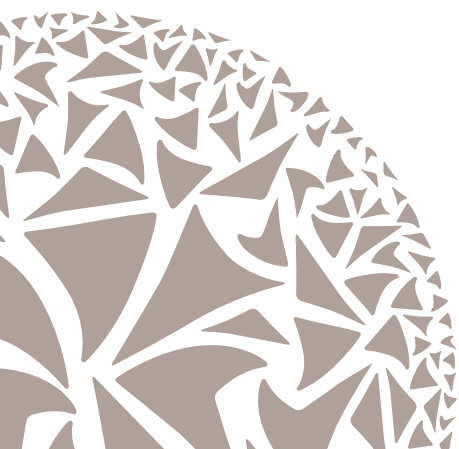
- » Have you investigated how the local city Destination Management Organization (DMO) or the city itself has worked to address discriminatory laws or regulations in their area?
- » Who owns the facility where the event is scheduled to take place?
- » Where do local elected officials stand on the legislation/policy?
- » What is the position of the state/local association and how involved are they in the debate over the policy in question?
- » Where was the municipal league on this issue?
- » Does the local jurisdiction have an anti-discrimination policy?
- » Where do the local and state tourism/hospitality associations stand on the legislation/policy?
- » What is the cities ranking on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Municipal Equality Index (MEI) Scorecard?
- » How can the association work with the local DMO and the association's own local members or chapter to demonstrate to legislators the broad negative results from discriminatory laws and regulations?

CONTRACT LEGAL QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- » Does the association have the option to cancel without penalty? If not, what are the financial, political, and cultural consequences of cancelling?
- » Is the hotel venue part of a national chain with options for transferring the event to a different venue?
- » What else can be done to address the offensive political decision in a jurisdiction where the association has an event venue legal agreement requiring going forward with the event (or suffering a large penalty)?

CONTRACT ETHICAL QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- » Consider all the parties who could be affected by the decision to cancel. This may include the members/attendees visiting for the event, the members of the association who live there, the association as a whole, the community hosting the event, the hourly hospitality workers at the venue, hotels, restaurants etc. Consider all of this, in combination with the policy decision and the contract, weighing the financial considerations as well as the association's values, and the impact on those affected by the decision to cancel or not. What are those implications for those involved? Take note to consider supplier, vendor, and speaker contracts.
- » How does the decision to stay at the venue or cancel intersect with the association's values statements, Code of Ethics, and/or advocacy positions held by the association?
- » Does staying or cancelling undermine or advance the association's reputation?



EQUITY ANALYSIS

The following questions address stakeholder and member impact:

- » Who is most adversely affected and impacted by the policy?
 - » Who faces barriers or bias, or exclusion from power, related to this issue?
 - » Are a large number of those affected making their living in hospitality and the venues, hotels, restaurants, etc?
- » How are groups differently situated or affected by this issue or policy?
 - » What are ways our stakeholders/members are adversely affected by the issue or policy?
 - » How will the proposed policy, practice or decision affect each group?
 - » How will the proposed policy, practice or decision be perceived by each group?
 - » Does the policy, practice or decision worsen or ignore existing disparities?

ASSOCIATION ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Substantive actions that associations can take to impact the policy concern, outside of cancelling the event:

- » Consider communicating with the members in advance of the event explaining the issue and the association's decision to stay. This may include an email communication, video message from the leadership, social media posts, etc. If there are safety concerns for some attendees given the issue, explain what the association will do to ensure their safety once on site.
- » Highlight the issue through possible education sessions that discuss the issue in a positive and constructive manner.
- » Host an in-person activity, charitable fundraiser, or service project in the community focused on the issue.
- » Determine if the association PAC and/or partner organizations have supported elected officials who voted for the legislation, and then engage with these elected officials prior to, during and post event.
- » Partner with the local chamber of commerce, destination organization i.e. convention and visitors bureau and local nonprofits or coalitions who are active on the issue and solicit their support of your action.
- » Consider involving the media to draw attention to the issue from the association's perspective.
- » Work with the local DMO and local chapter to affect change and meet with local legislators on how discriminatory laws negatively affect their members.
- » Consider meeting with local political decision makers to highlight the concerns for the association.

ONGOING ISSUE SCANNING

ASAE recommends that the advocacy team update the board of any potential or pending legislation that negatively impacts our policy statements on a regular basis.

