

## MISSION STATEMENT

Advancing sewing as an art and life skill.

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# National Notes

MARIA TREVINO, EVENTS MANAGER



A frequently asked question is “Why hasn’t the ASG annual conference come to \_\_\_\_\_?” When we explain the requirements for an ASG conference, most members quickly realize why we haven’t been to many chapter cities.

Let us take you on an imaginary location search and site inspection. Does the location have a major airport offering reasonably priced flights in and out from anywhere in the country without having to change planes numerous times and then rent a car to arrive at the destination? Do most major airlines fly in and out of the airport? Is there a shuttle or public transportation between the airport and the venue? Is there convenient and reasonably-priced parking for attendees who will be driving?

Now imagine we’ve arrived at the hotel. ASG conference requires a minimum of 400–450 double rooms. Few hotels have this many double rooms. Those that cater to conventions and conferences are designed with business groups in mind and have a much larger ratio of single rooms to doubles. If they do have enough double rooms, what is their best room rate? How high are the additional room taxes? Many of the places we would most love to go to have room rates of \$250 a day and up, well beyond what most ASG members are comfortable spending. What are the hotel’s restaurant options? Can they handle large numbers of attendees who want to eat quickly between a day of classes and an evening event?

Next, we require two large ballrooms (most venues have only one)—a 25,000 square foot vendor/exhibit area and an additional ballroom to seat up to 1,000 for breakfast and lunch each day. That ballroom is also set up for our fashion show on Friday night. We also require 18-to-20 classrooms. Two or three of these rooms must seat 125, lecture-style and the remainder must seat up to 50, classroom-

style with tables. The vendor/exhibitor hall must have reasonable access, including a load-

ing dock for vendors. Many vendors pass on places that don’t easily accommodate their trucks and trailers. Union requirements can make or break our conference budget and may make it impossible for participating vendors to make a profit if they can’t plug in a cord without paying someone else to do it. Are there nearby restaurants and eateries where attendees can catch a quick dinner and be back for the fashion show? Is the city a destination site with unique attractions that will appeal to sewing enthusiasts and their spouses? Enough ASG members within the area to make the conference a success? Other sewing shows in the area regularly? We need to draw a good attendance from local chapter members. Is the local chapter an active, enthusiastic one that will provide on-site volunteers and hospitality?

We have experimented with convention centers. It involves having attendees at various hotels throughout the surrounding area, which greatly increases the amount of walking to get back and forth between venues. A large percentage of our attendees have physical limitations and we must be mindful of their needs.

Yes, we’d all love to go to Boston, New York, San Francisco, and San Diego but these “top tier” cities come with room rates well beyond our budget and seldom meet our space requirements. Armed with the information presented here, you are invited to send us leads on facilities and locations that meet our criteria. We strive to offer the best possible conference experience at the best possible price. Every ASG member owes it to themselves to attend an ASG conference at least once—there is no other sewing event that compares to it!