

YALSA Board of Directors
Midwinter Meeting, Seattle
January 25 – 29, 2019

Topic: Selection of 2019 Symposium Site

Background: Over the past several months YALSA staff have been exploring options for a location for YALSA’s 2019 YA Services Symposium. The Symposium helps YALSA work towards its goal of Leading the Transformation of Teen Services. This is also a revenue source which YALSA uses to fund member services, as well as a popular event with teen services staff. The goal is to obtain approval for the date and location of the 2019 symposium now to be able to negotiate the best rates with the hotel. Identifying the date and location over a year in advance will also ensure adequate time to plan and promote the event. Nichole O’Connor has submitted the proposal below for the Board’s consideration.

Action Required: Action

Proposal: Confirm Memphis, TN, as the location for the 2019 YA Services Symposium

DATES TO AVOID

Holidays:

Oct 14 Columbus Day
Nov 5 Election Day
Nov 11 Veterans Day
Nov 28 Thanksgiving Day

2019 Events:

- 2019 ALA Annual Conference in DC June 20-25
- National Book Festival in DC, Sept. (they won’t know the exact date until 12 months in advance)
- ALSC Institute (only happens on even years)
- AASL National Conference, November 14-16 in Louisville
- Teen Read Week™ (Oct. 13-19)
- ALAN Workshop in St. Louis, Nov. 15-18
- Regional Book events (see www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/bookfair.html)

2020 Events:

- 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia: January 24-28, 2020
- PLA National Conference will be Nashville February 25-29, 2020

RECOMMENDED DATES: (please note: hotel rates typically drop at the end of Oct.)

- November 1 – 4 (first choice)
- November 8 – 11 (second choice)

FORMER SYMPOSIUM LOCATIONS

2018: Salt Lake City, UT
2017: Louisville, KY
2016: Pittsburgh, PA
2015: Portland, OR
2014: Austin, TX
2012: St. Louis, MO
2010: Albuquerque, NM
2008: Nashville, TN

POTENTIAL 2019 LOCATIONS:

Criteria:

- safety for attendees
- size and proximity of airport to downtown
- transportation options w/in the city
- size of area drive-in population
- hotel rates and availability
- lack of other library events in area at the time of Symposium
- not an area where YALSA has recently hosted a Symposium, Institute or other event
- not in a part of the country where ALA has recently hosted a major event
- prior success of other ALA functions in city
- potential draw as tourist destination
- 2nd tier city to ensure lower rates for attendees

Surveys of past attendees consistently show that affordability is a key criteria for them.

Areas of focus for 2019:

We have surveyed attendees on location preferences since 2014. When asked what cities they would like to see host they Symposium, attendees continuously rank the same cities high. We also ask attendees what their determining factor(s) to attend is, and location is usually the most important (often ranked higher than content). Therefore, we sent RFPs to the following cities:

- Savannah, GA
- Tampa, FL
- Cincinnati, OH
- Charleston, SC
- Memphis, TN

State Conferences:

**YALSA Board of Directors – Midwinter 2019
Selection of the 2019 Symposium Site
Item #2**

- Georgia Library Association (Council of Media Organizations), October
- Florida Library Association Conference, May
- South Carolina Library Association Conference, October
- Tennessee Library Association in Chattanooga, April
- Ohio Library Association Joint Conference, October

Taking into consideration all of the information above, Request for Proposals (RFP) were sent out in May, 2018.

- Based on the response to the RFP, Savannah was eliminated because the lowest hotel rate offered was \$174 a night
- Tampa was eliminated because the lowest hotel rates offered were \$139 and \$150
- Charleston was eliminated because the lowest hotel rate offered was \$135 a night
- Memphis and Cincinnati each offered hotel rates under \$130

Based on the above information, YALSA chose to focus on Cincinnati and Memphis.

Cincinnati	Dates Available	Room rate	Complimentary Accommodations	Meeting Rooms
Westin Cincinnati	November 1 - 4	\$149	1 per 50	Complimentary with \$25,000 spend on food & beverage
Hilton Netherland Plaza	November 1 - 4	\$125	1 per 45	Complimentary with \$25,000 spend on food & beverage
Memphis	Dates Available	Room rate, room block info	Complimentary Accommodations	Meeting Room Rental
Peabody	n/a			
Sheraton (with Convention Center)	November 1 - 4	\$129	1 per 40	\$8465.6, but the CVB will cover the rental cost, so \$0.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on previous site visits, the Memphis Sheraton with the Convention Center from Nov. 1- Nov. 4 is the best fit for the Symposium. The Convention Center has adequate meeting space and has room for us to grow. The hotel itself recently underwent room renovations and is within walking distance of shopping and restaurants, as well as a free downtown trolley. Memphis also has many interesting destinations, including The National Civil Rights Museum, that will be a draw for attendees.

Cincinnati was a strong second and will likely be seriously considered for future symposia, provided that the city resolves the matter regarding proposed legislation targeting trans teens.

Fiscal Implications

The affordable hotel room rates can help ensure strong attendance, and the \$0 fee for meeting rooms will help YALSA curb expenses.

Evaluation

YALSA surveys attendees after the event to gauge overall satisfaction as well as measure learning experiences in regards to individual sessions. The survey also helps YALSA identify areas for improvement for the next event.

Alignment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Goals

The Symposium Planning Taskforce will review YALSA's Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and seek out program proposals and presenters that support YALSA's EDI goals. Memphis also provides YALSA an opportunity to connect attendees with institutions such as the Lorraine Motel, the National Civil Rights Museum, and the Slavehaven Underground Railroad Museum.

Proposed Board Action

Approve Memphis as the site for the 2019 symposium and direct the Executive Director to work with staff to execute the necessary contracts with the hotel.

Additional Information

- ALA Calendar of Events: www.ala.org/conferencesevents/calendarofevents
- Memphis Tourism site: <https://www.memphistravel.com/>
- YALSA Symposium FAQ: www.ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium/FAQ