ACHA Values-driven Framework for Site Selection of Annual Meeting and Live Events

ACHA is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility. These values are part of our core identity as the leading national organization for college health and well-being, and they extend beyond the students, staff, and faculty under our care to also include the communities we impact.

Living these values becomes complicated when sociopolitical challenges which do not align with our values arise in cities, states, or regions around the country where the ACHA Annual Meeting or other live (i.e., in-person) event is scheduled to take place. In these circumstances, members have sometimes requested that the event be moved or cancelled.

Decisions about where to hold the Annual Meeting and spend association dollars are complicated. These conversations are further complicated by factors such as the need to book venues many years in advance; contractual obligations which include penalties and fees for non-compliance; and the unpredictable nature of state, local, and national politics and policies.

Messaging to Members

ACHA recognizes that members may have legitimate and serious concerns regarding the laws or policies in certain locations, and ACHA may share these concerns, especially when related to laws that are discriminatory in nature and do not align with ACHA’s stated values.

ACHA also recognizes that canceling or moving the Annual Meeting has many repercussions, some of them unintended and potentially harmful. When substantial numbers of members request that the Annual Meeting or other event be moved or cancelled, the ACHA Board may direct the national office to issue communications on their behalf. Such communications may contain some or all of the following points, or others:

First, policymakers are not impacted by event cancellations. They respond to their constituent voters.

Second, hotel and conference center employees who staff the Annual Meeting venues are often from marginalized or non-majority populations. If the event does not take place, they have no work.

Third, pulling out of a city or state removes ACHA’s opportunity to show support for populations targeted by policies, and groups allied in protest against such policies. Withdrawing contributes to their erasure.

Fourth, ACHA has a duty to its members in all sections of the country. All deserve the opportunity to engage in the education, networking, and camaraderie that the Annual Meeting provides. For many members, the Annual Meeting is only accessible if it occurs within driving distance of their home. Therefore, ACHA needs to rotate the location of the meeting to reach all regions of the country.
ACHA remains committed to our DEIJA values, and to making the Annual Meeting equitably available, accessible, and safe for our members, regardless of where it takes place.

Therefore, the ACHA Board of Directors has adopted the following decision-making framework to guide the site selection process for the Annual Meeting:

**Venue Logistics, Accessibility & Safety**

- Location selection should take into consideration the safety and wellbeing of all attendees, conferees, exhibitors, and staff.
- Location selection should take into consideration site locations that, over time, permit the largest numbers of members to attend.
- Venues should be accessible to major national airports and other modes of transportation that take into account the affordability of traveling to the venue.
- Venues should be ADA compliant, accommodate for special needs in guest rooms and facilities, provide ease of access to, between, and within meeting spaces, and make any and all efforts to accommodate the diversity of ACHA membership.
- If needed, the rationale for location decisions should be clearly communicated to the membership.
- Venue should meet all the capacity and functionality requirements for meeting rooms, Exhibit Hall, and other meeting events.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

- ACHA shall continue to make diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility an integral priority in Annual Meeting program planning, regardless of location.
- State laws, policies, and travel bans (and the state laws that trigger them) should inform but not govern ACHA’s site selection process.
- Venues must have accessibility, diversity, and inclusion policies in place, and ensure that venue facilities can be tailored to meet the accessibility needs of all ACHA members.
- In circumstances when ACHA holds an event in a city or state with controversial legislation or policies not aligned with ACHA values, the Association may partner with one or more member institutions and/or ACHA regional affiliates to determine value-aligned actions.

**After venue contract has been signed**

After venue contracts have been signed, the following actions/guidelines should be considered if the Association becomes aware of changes to laws, policies, or practices at the selected site and/or city or state:

- Conduct research to ascertain facts of the current situation and projected plans for legislation, policies, practices, etc.
- Communicate with members about the issues, dilemmas, and decision-making
process through a variety of formats

- Provide opportunities for engaged dialogue among leaders and members (conference calls, etc.)
- Communicate concerns with the contracted sites and the impact of these types of laws, practices, and policies on our willingness to choose this city in the future
- Sponsor educational program(s) and/or advocacy initiatives in advance of and/or during the scheduled event.