



Future Worldcon Bid Questionnaire

General

Name of Bid

Memphis in 2023

What dates are you bidding for?

August 23-27, 2023



What is your proposed convention host city? Is your convention site in a city center location YES (or a suburb)? (If a suburb, what are the transport options into the city centre? N/A) (How far is the site from the city centre? N/A) What are your main facilities? How far are your hotels from your main venue? On-site

[Memphis Renasant Convention Center](#), downtown Memphis, Tennessee, USA

- located at [255 N Main St in the Memphis city center](#)
- formerly the Memphis Cook Convention Center (this is a facility name change, not a location change)
- newly renovated
- approximately 300,000 sq ft (27,900 sq m) total event space
- a 118,000 sq ft (11,000 sq m) exhibit hall
- a 28,000 sq ft (2,600 sq m) ballroom
- 46 flexible meeting rooms which can be arranged in larger and smaller configurations
- a 2,100-seat auditorium/theatre (the [Cannon Center for the Performing Arts](#))
- 1,800 hotel rooms nearby
- within walking distance to restaurants and bars

We also expect to have all function space at the **Sheraton Hotel** at our disposal. This is our main hotel, and it is directly connected to the Convention Center via an enclosed skybridge.

- 14,675 sq ft (1,363 sq m) total event space
- 13 event/breakout rooms (capacity of largest space configuration is 414 persons)

We had planned to carry out a site visit in late April or May 2020, but our ability to do so was overtaken by current events.

Who is your bid chair? Who is on your committee? What experience do they have in general? In running Worldcons?

Our current bid chairs are Cliff Dunn and Kate Secor.

Kate Secor has filled positions at almost every level at various conventions, including con chair, roving troubleshooter, GoH coordinator, Associate Area Head of Site Selection, and Deputy Division Head of WSFS Division. She is currently acting as the head of programming for Capclave 2020.

Cliff Dunn has served as the Con Chair's assistant at a Worldcon, as a hotel liaison for the MAGFest music and gaming festival, in volunteer roles with other nonprofit organizations, and as chair of WSFS' Hugo Award Study committee for several years.

Mike Willmoth has been involved in fandom since 1987, was Chair of World Fantasy Convention 2004, World Horror Convention 2004, Westercon 62 (Fiestacon) in 2009, and Vice-Chair of Sasquan in 2015. He has served in various roles on numerous Worldcon and WHC committees, frequently as Hotel Liaison, Treasurer, or Science Program Liaison, and was Deputy Division Head for Facilities for Worldcon 76. He served as a board member of the Arizona fandom organization LepreCon, Inc. for nearly 30 years, starting in 1988. He has also served on the WSFS Mark Protection Committee and the Worldcon Runner's Guide Editorial Committee.

Jo Van was Hugo Packet Coordinator and a contributor to the Souvenir Program for Worldcon 75, was part of the WSFS team at Dublin 2019, served as part of the Virtual con team for CoNZealand, and is a member of the Hugo Award Marketing Committee, the Mark Protection Committee, and the Hugo Category Committee. She has also served in various managerial and staff roles in other nonprofit organizations.

We also have more than two dozen people who have volunteered to assist the bid in various capacities, including Promotions once in-person conventions become possible again.

If known, who will be the chair of the convention? What experience do they have?

Kate Secor will be Convention Chair; see credentials listed above.

Have you agreed to participate in Pass-Along Funds? Would you be willing to increase the percentage from 50% to 70% of surplus?

Yes, we will participate in Pass-Along Funds. We cannot speak to percentage increases at this time, as it would depend on what impact this increase would have on our ability to fulfill responsibilities such as attempting to reimburse our committee and staff.

Contact Information:

Website: <https://www.memphis23.org>

E-mail: memphisin2023@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MemphisIn2023>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MemphisIn2023>

Travel

What is the typical current airfare to your closest airport from world cities such as London, Boston, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Melbourne, etc.?

- quoted fares are from December 2019 (current fares are non-representative)
- no projections or guarantees can be made for fares in 2023, due to the pandemic
- quoted airfares are Coach/Economy class (lowest-rated fares)
- quoted fares are for 2-3 weeks advance purchase and for 3-month advance purchase
- quoted fares presume a Saturday night stay and +/-1-day flexibility
- exchange rates were calculated via Google

Airfare from:	2-3 weeks advance purchase		3-month advance purchase	
	local	\$USD	local	\$USD
Auckland	NZD 2029-2184	\$1313-1413	NZD 1688-1832	\$1092-1185
Boston		\$275-278		\$275-278
Chengdu	RMB 9410-12251	\$1431-1863	RMB 8542-11028	\$1299-1677
Chicago		\$239-256		\$239-256
Dallas		\$136-228		\$136-228
Dublin	€ 817-1150	\$924-1300	€ 643-899	\$721-1007
Helsinki	€ 898-1300	\$1015-1471	€ 767-1000	\$859-1120
London	£ 953-1150	\$1147-1384	£ 597-714	\$720-862
Los Angeles		\$237-254		\$181-197
Melbourne	AUD 1422-2266	\$965-1538	AUD 1464-1703	\$995-1158
Mexico City	Mex\$ 10796-18983	\$538-946	Mex\$ 8428-14809	\$420-738
New Delhi	₹ 56207-75067	\$757-1011	₹ 43665-60149	588-810
New York City		\$255-270		\$226-262
Paris	€ 816-1024	\$966-1213	€ 637-820	\$754-970
Rio de Janeiro	R\$ 3492-7729	\$642-1421	R\$ 2687-7348	\$494-1351
Seattle		\$293-296		\$204-321
Tokyo	¥ 139330-223137	\$1335-2138	¥ 101653-166152	\$974-1592
Washington, DC		\$211-296		\$194-244

Do international flights, as well as domestic, fly into your local airport? Which airlines? If not, where is the closest international airport? Are direct flights from the cities above flown into your local airport?

Airlines:

United Airlines American Airlines Delta Airlines Southwest Airlines
 Allegiant Air Frontier Airlines Southern Airways Express

Memphis Airport (MEM) is chiefly a domestic airport, but [Memphis Airport has non-stop flights](#) to most major airline hubs and international airports in the U.S., including:

Atlanta	ATL	Dallas	DFW, DAL	Los Angeles	LAX	Philadelphia	PHL
Austin	AUS	Denver	DEN	Miami	MIA	Phoenix	PHX
Baltimore	BWI	Detroit	DTW	Minneapolis	MSP	Salt Lake City	SLC
Charlotte	CLT	Houston	IAH, HOU	Newark (NYC)	EWR	Tampa	TPA
Chicago	ORD, MDW	Las Vegas	LAS	Orlando	MCO	Wash DC	DCA, IAD

The nearest “true international” airports are in Chicago (from which there is a daily train), Dallas, and Atlanta.

We make absolutely no representation whatsoever as to what the flight situation will look like in 2023.

Train fares

- [Amtrak](#) has historically run daily service from Chicago to New Orleans via Memphis
- as of 2019, coach fares from Chicago run from \$87-168 one-way (\$174-336 round-trip)
- roomettes (with one passenger) run \$197-259 one-way (\$394-518 round-trip)
- bedrooms run \$259-420 one-way (\$518-840 round-trip)

Please note that the Amtrak service is also currently in a bit of limbo, but we are hopeful that this will achieve a positive resolution by 2023.

How far is your convention site from the nearest airport/train station and what is the likely cost of getting to the hotels by both public transport and taxi from that airport/train station?

Memphis Airport

- approximately 10 miles (16 km) from the Convention Center
- Taxi fare to/from convention center is estimated at \$27.98, with ridesharing in the ballpark of \$18-20
- both Uber and Lyft are currently operating at the Memphis Airport
- Airport Shuttle is \$20 one way / \$30 round trip/return trip
- [MATA \(Memphis Area Transit Authority\) Bus #28](#) (a ½-hour ride), runs from the Airport to the Hudson Transit Center downtown, which is a 0.4 mi (0.7 km) walk from the Convention Center, and which also connects to the trolley lines (see below); check the schedule for availability; pre-pandemic fare was \$2.60 one way.

Memphis Amtrak Station (train)

- approximately 1.5 miles (2.4 km) from the Convention Center
- Taxi fare to/from convention center is estimated at \$10, with ridesharing in the ballpark of \$8
- MATA’s Riverfront Trolley Bus line stops at the station (operating every 40 minutes)
- MATA’s Main Street Trolley Rail line stops approximately one block away (operating every 12 minutes)
- both trolley lines run to the convention center and the hotel areas; base trolley fares are \$1 per ride and daily passes can be purchased for \$3.50.

Facilities

What hotel(s) are being used for the convention? How many rooms, what type, do they accommodate accessibility needs, etc.? What are your hotel room rates? Do these rates include breakfast? Do they include internet access in the room? How firm are these rates? What additional taxes and fees are there?

[Sheraton Memphis Downtown](#) (primary hotel)

- approximately 600 smoke-free guest rooms, of which we are contracting for 500
- rooms come in Single-King, Double-Double, and (costs extra) Suite configurations
- nightly convention rate for 1-2 persons is \$159 + 15.95% local taxes (no “resort” fee)
- room rates still to be confirmed
- provision has been made for shoulder nights
- breakfast is not included
- restaurant and bar/lounge on site
- indoor heated pool
- 24-hr fitness center
- free wi-fi for guests
- attached covered parking
- directly connected to the Convention Center via an enclosed skybridge

In addition to the main hotel:

- We are pursuing an optioned block at the [Crowne Plaza](#) (approximately one block away) as well.
- We expect to have additional room blocks at other hotels in the vicinity; the other hotels either adjacent to the Convention Center, or in a cluster several blocks away within one block of the Main Street Rail Line which have roughly another 800 rooms.
- We expect that these hotels will provide a wide range of price points.
- Several other nearby hotels are supposed to be finished by 2023, and while we expect that some of these will come online, we are not including them in our plans.

We are being intentionally conservative about contracting for room blocks at this point; our expectation is that we will have a vaccine firmly in place well in advance of our convention, but that still leaves open questions in terms of whether the behavior of fandom changes in a meaningful way regarding in-person conventions (in terms of in-person attendance counts and travel patterns).

What does parking cost at your main hotels?

The Sheraton offers valet parking only onsite with offsite self-parking nearby, rates to be determined.

What is the distance from the nearest door of your main hotel(s) to the closest entrance of the convention site? What are the transportation options for those who prefer not to walk or who have mobility difficulties?

The Convention Center and our main hotel, the Sheraton, are under the same roof (there is an enclosed skybridge).

Nearby hotels:	
Crowne Plaza	within 0.2 mi / 0.3 km
Comfort Inn	
Courtyard by Marriott	
Springhill Suites	within 0.3 mi / 0.5 km
MOXY	
Big Cypress Lodge	within 0.4 mi / 0.6 km
Hotel Indigo	within 0.5 mi / 0.8 km
Hotel Napoleon	
Residence Inn	
Holiday Inn	within 0.6 mi / 1.0 km
Canopy by Hilton	
The Peabody Memphis	
Doubletree	within 0.7 mi / 1.1 km
Hilton Garden Inn	
Hampton Inn	within 0.8 mi / 1.3 km
Westin Memphis	within 0.9 mi / 1.4 km

Where will your large events (i.e. Hugo Ceremony and Masquerade) be held?

- Hugo Ceremony and Masquerade: The Cannon Center for the Performing Arts (a 2,100-seat auditorium/theatre), with an overflow location with remote broadcast for the Hugos if necessary to accommodate members who wish to attend
- Hugo Finalist Pre-Reception: 28,000 sq ft (2,600 sq m) ballroom
- Dealer’s Hall / Art Show: 118,000 sq ft (11,000 sq m) exhibit hall

Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.

Downtown Memphis has numerous restaurants, and Memphis is known in particular for its excellent BBQ. In addition to the large number of restaurants located near the Convention Center and along the pedestrianized Main Street Rail Line, the famous Beale Street is located a short trolley ride from the convention center.

Nearby restaurants, cafes, pubs, grills, bistros, takeouts, and coffee shops:	
Crossroads Tavern & Grille	within 0.1 mi / 0.15 km
Alcenia's Southern-Style Cuisine	
Westy's Southern Eats & Pies	within 0.2 mi / 0.3 km
Ferraros Pizzeria & Pub	
Notes and Provisions Restaurant & Bar	
Comeback Coffee	
Rendezvous Ribs	
Qahwa Coffee Bar	
Louisiana Joe Wings & Things	
Wrapzody Gourmet Wrapz	
Blue Plate Cafe	within 0.4 mi / 0.6 km
Hu Diner Southern Food	
Lenny's Sub Shop	
Sam's Main Street Eatery	
Felicia Suzanne's Southern Food	

Nearby restaurants, cafes, pubs, grills, bistros, takeouts, and coffee shops:	
Cafe Keough	within 0.5 mi / 0.8 km
McEwen's Restaurant	
Flight Restaurant & Wine Bar	
Bardog Tavern	
Little Tea Shop	
Uncle Buck's Fish Bowl and Grill	within 0.6 mi / 1.0 km
Charlie Vergos' Rendezvous	
Peabody Restaurant	
Peabody Deli & Desserts	
Huey's Downtown	
Subway Sandwich Shop	
Downtown Bar and Grille	
117 Prime Steakhouse	
Kooky Canuck	
Local on Main Street	
Yao's Downtown China Bistro	within 0.7 mi / 1.1 km
Aldo's Pizza Pies	
Bluefin Japanese Restaurant	
Majestics American Grill	
Texas de Brazil	

What arrangements will be made for evening socialising and party space? Do you have a corkage waiver?

We are negotiating for corkage/forkage waivers with our hotels. The exact situation of the consuite is still TBD (portions of this decision will have to wait based on how practices develop across fandom), but there will be a waiver in place for that.

Please describe the policies / laws regarding smoking in your hotel(s), convention centre, and city.

- Hotel: Memphis bans smoking in all hotels.
- Convention Center: The convention center will be non-smoking.
- City: Smoking is banned in all enclosed public spaces per public law. There is not a ban on outdoor smoking.

Given the current pandemic, have you considered any arrangements have been made for social distancing and the health and safety of members? If you have, can you describe what your current plans are?

This is a question that we are going to have to answer as we draw closer. We will decide these policies closer to the convention date, based on a mixture of:

- membership feedback;
- prevailing policies and practices at other conventions moving through late 2021 and 2022;
- the general state of vaccine distribution and infection statistics as we proceed through 2021 and into 2022;
- and, of course, any legal restrictions.

Miscellaneous

What type of weather can we expect during your convention? What is the average temperature during that time of year?

- hot summer weather in August
(all convention spaces and hotel rooms have air conditioning)
- sunrise around 6:30am, sunset around 7:40pm (13+ hours of daylight)
- average highs are around 90 F / 32 C, average lows around 70 F / 21 C
- it rains about once a week on average

What are some of the main tourist attractions of your city?

- [National Civil Rights Museum](#) and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial
- [Graceland](#) (Elvis Presley's mansion and museum)
- [The Memphis Zoo](#)
- [Memphis Brooks Museum of Art](#)
- [Belz Museum of Asian and Judaic Art](#)
- [Beale Street](#) (famous for its blues bars and music halls)
- Pink Palace – the [Museum Of Science & History](#) and [Planetarium](#)
- [Sun Studio](#) (the Birthplace of Rock 'n Roll)
- Visit the Peabody Hotel to see the [Peabody Ducks](#) in the fountain and have high tea
- [Memphis Pyramid](#) – with observation deck, restaurants, archery range, shooting range, laser arcade, bowling alley, and saltwater aquarium
- Free concerts at the [Levitt Shell](#) in Overton Park

Are you planning to have any membership discounts for certain demographic groups, such as young adults, military, or seniors?

We are planning to have group discounts for

- young adults
- children
- first-time Worldcon attendees
- military members

We will examine pricing packages for families as well as for kids-in-tow and similar scenarios.

What is your vision for your Worldcon? How do you plan to make it happen?

Our goal is to create a convention which is truly by fans, for fans. There will be no influence, interference, or control over our Worldcon by local, state, or national governments – although the local hotels, convention center, and tourism board have been enthusiastic about working with us to create the best possible convention based on Worldcon fans' needs. We would like to provide an experience which is as personal as possible, for as many fans as possible, without creating an environment which is overcrowded or inaccessible to attendees. We want attendees to be able to interact as individuals, rather than as part of a massive crowd. With that in mind, we will be working for a balance of in-person events with realistic membership capacities, and virtual opportunities for those who are unable to attend.

What is a notable aspect of your local fan culture and how do you plan to incorporate it into your Worldcon?

We are planning to make special provision for local authors to participate in the convention, as well as bringing members of local Southern fandom groups on board to the committee, and intend to have a scholarship program to enable staff, participants, and attendees from local and marginalized communities to participate.

Do you have a code of conduct? If so, is it available online and if so, where?

Our current [Code of Conduct](#) can be seen here. The convention's final Code of Conduct will be similar to this in terms of its expectations of our members. Once seated, we will need to seek legal counsel on developing the finalized language for our Code of Conduct.

What is your weapons policy?

There will be a "no live weapons" policy in all public convention spaces in the Convention Center and the main hotel, the Sheraton. This includes no open carry, no concealed carry, and no prop weapons which could be mistaken for real weapons. Furthermore, costumes depicting past or present military, paramilitary, or police forces in the real world are not permitted. For more information, see our [Weapons and Costume Policy](#).

What do diversity and inclusion mean to you?

Diversity and inclusion for us would be ensuring that people from historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups see the event as something that would be welcoming to them, enjoyable for them, and something that they would be able to attend despite financial or geographical obstacles.

How are you working towards your goals in these areas?

- We have established a Code of Conduct which requires members to treat other attendees with courtesy and respect, and will have a well-defined, well-publicized process for reporting and dealing with any conduct issues which occur.
- We will be working closely with Guests of Honor, presenters, moderators, panelists, and anyone else who will be making remarks to audiences at the convention, to ensure that those remarks are consistent with the Code of Conduct and that they show courtesy and respect to all attendees.
- Pre-recorded remarks will be vetted (and edited, if necessary) to ensure that they are compliant with the Code of Conduct.
- We intend to have a scholarship program to enable staff, participants, and attendees from local and marginalized communities to participate.
- We intend to be as proactive and attentive as we can be regarding the makeup of panels, making sure that panelists are not "miscast" or placed with people they know they do not get along with. We will also do our best to ensure that a broad range of topics are covered, that panels are composed of a diverse group of people, and to work with various marginalized groups to ensure that their views are represented.

- We are working to establish a convention committee which includes BIPOC and LGBTQ members; we are not as far along in this process as we would like to be, and we will be working hard during the next 2 years to increase this representation.

What would concrete achievements look like in these areas?

- Our bid and our convention would have significant participation by BIPOC and LGBTQ members, and Programming would reflect a wide range of participants and topics which include those communities.
- Our bid and our convention would have minimal Code of Conduct violations and reports – not because people don't feel that reporting would do any good, but rather because the actual occurrence of such incidents is at a minimum.
- Any reported incidents would be immediately dealt with and resolved in such a way that participants feel that their concerns have been adequately addressed.
- All participants would report that they felt welcomed and respected.

What changes or challenges do you expect the current pandemic to present?

The pandemic has already made a total hash of the bidding process versus what we were expecting, complicating our ability to recruit volunteers and promote the bid. We expect these issues to continue for most of 2021. The pandemic has also completely upended our budgeting efforts, prevented site visits, and caused the biggest dent in in-person fan activity since World War II. We don't know how quickly things will recover, what the in-person and/or virtual attendance rates will look like, and how this will impact all sorts of elements of our convention.

At present, we expect a “smaller-than-usual” convention on the basis of travel patterns not necessarily returning to normal, but we're at least confident that some sort of in-person event should be doable (although we are engaging in contingency planning in case in-person events are still problematic). But we're also considering the possibility that we will have a fairly large event, too.

The main problem that we're facing is an unprecedented number of “known unknowns”: We can point to the likely issues (e.g. “What will social distancing policies look like?”) but we don't know, and in some cases *can't* know, key elements (e.g. “Regardless of stated convention policies, if we're able to 'safely' hold an in-person event, how likely is it that people will be willing to socially distance at an in-person convention a year after case counts presumably come down?”).

We *will* be taking steps to prevent overcrowding and streamline traffic flows (this has been an issue at larger events) and avoiding lots of waiting lines. But we would be looking at solutions for that regardless of the pandemic.

Have you planned for a virtual component to your convention?

The short version is “Yes”. Here’s the longer version:

- We expect to have a Discord channel (or some equivalent) for member interaction.
- We intend to have significant online coverage of key events – although a mixture of tech costs and operational constraints may restrict our ability to cover everything in this way – BUT:
- Broadcasting the convention’s Programming potentially forces all of our participants to agree to have all of their panels placed on the internet for all eternity. So this is something that will be negotiated with our guests/participants, whether it’s all recordings for a limited time or some recordings publicly available forever.
- We also expect that there will be some practical constraints in terms of allowing virtual members to participate on in-person panels/Q-and-A sessions. We're going to have to see how this plays out over the next two years or so before making final decisions on how to proceed, since we're very aware that People Points are a limited resource.

Your members vote for Hugo Finalists who are then excited and wish to play a full part in the convention programme. How do you plan to facilitate the Finalists input as recognised by your community?

We want to make every effort to include Hugo Finalists in Programming. This will include (but not be limited to):

- reserving empty Programming slots for Panels and Readings for Finalists in advance
- working with the WSFS Division to facilitate communication with the Hugo Finalists
- making an extra effort to include in some panels (technology permitting) those who can't attend the convention in-person.