

Questionnaire Instructions

Please answer all the questions in line below. If a question doesn't apply to your bid, please state: N/A.

If the answer won't be known until some future date, please provide an estimate of when you will be able to provide an answer. For example, for the question about room rates you might answer "These are expected to be agreed to by [date]. Current internet rates are X per night room only for a double or twin and Y for single occupancy."

We plan to make your responses available in PDF format on our website as well as having a limited number of printed copies at the convention.

Questionnaire

General

Q1: Name of Convention?

Smofcon 41

Q2: What dates will your convention run?

December 6-8, 2024

Q3: What is your proposed convention host city?

Seattle, Washington, USA

Q4: Is your convention site in a city center location or a suburb? If a suburb, what are the transport options into the city center? How far is the site from the city center?

We are adjacent to Seattle (Seatac) Airport. Sound Transit LINK light rail runs from the airport to the city. It is less than 14 miles to downtown, which is 23 minutes by car, taxi, or Uber, or not quite an hour by public transit.

Q5: What are your main facilities? How far are your hotels from your main venue?

We are hosting the convention at the DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport. This is the venue.

Q6: Who is your convention chair?

Marah Searle-Kovacevic

Q7: Who is on your committee?

Marah Searle-Kovacevic: Chair
Angela Jones: Treasurer
Dick O'Shea: Hotel Liaison
Sally Woehrlle: Chair Emeritus
David Guon: Registrar
Alex von Thorn: Programming
Joni Brill Dashoff: Hospitality
Julie Amundson: Hospitality Assistant

Q8/Q9: What experience do they have in general?

What experience do they have in running (insert appropriate convention here, i.e. Worldcons/NASFiCs/Smofcons)?

Marah was bid vice-chair, hospitality division head, and social media head for Sasquan, the 2015 Worldcon. She was chair of ConComCon in 2012 in Spokane, a Northwest regional conrunning convention. She has served in many roles up to division head level at Worldcons, NASFiCs, Westercons, World Fantasy Conventions, SMOFCons, and other conventions.

Angela has run many dealers rooms at different conventions, and in recent years she has also been working in other areas of exhibits and finance.

Dick has worked on many conventions in the Seattle area including Rustycons, Westercons, NASFiC, and Worldcon, often as treasurer or hotel liaison.

Sally was chair of the 2015 Worldcon in Spokane. She was also chair of Westercon in 1997, and has played many roles at different Northwest regional conventions.

Alex was chair of the successful Worldcon bid for Spokane in 2015. He has worked on Worldcons, NASFiCs, World Fantasy, as well as local conventions in Toronto, Seattle,

Spokane, Vancouver, Montreal, Detroit, Chicago, and Des Moines, volunteering in programming, publications, website, registration, hotel liaison, finance, and other roles.

Joni has been a mainstay of Worldcon fandom in many roles, and has run or helped with art show, finance, and hospitality at many conventions.

Q10: If applicable, have you agreed to participate in Pass-Along-Funds? Would you be willing to increase the percentage from 50% to 70%?

n/a

Q11: What is the sponsoring organization?

SWOC, originally the Seattle Westercon Organizing Committee

Q12: Is the sponsoring organization a 501(c)(3) or otherwise a non-profit? If not a 501(c)(3) but a non-profit, please explain.

SWOC is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Q13: Is the sponsoring organization tax-exempt for local taxes, especially sales tax?

SWOC is a standard 501(c)(3), and as such follows standard practices. Washington State law does not give nonprofit organizations a blanket sales tax or use tax exemption. Generally, nonprofit organizations are taxed like any other consumer or business on their purchases or rentals of consumable supplies, furniture, equipment, and retail services.

Q14: What is your website and/or Facebook group?

www.smofcon41.org

A Facebook page will be created should we be selected to host the 2024 SMOFCon.

Q15: Who should people contact for additional information or questions (email preferred)?

email@smofcon41.org

Travel

Q16: What is the typical current airfare to your closest airport from world cities such as London, Boston, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Melbourne, etc.?

Seattle International Airport (SEA) is the nearest airport. Airfare from recent Smofcon/Worldcon cities is around: \$300 from Boston, \$549 from Montreal, \$1016 from Lisbon, \$174 from Albuquerque, \$271 from Chicago, \$370 from Washington, \$568 from London.

Q17: Do international flights, as well as domestic, fly into your local airport? Which airlines? If not, where is the closest international airport?

SEA is a major international and American hub. All major airlines or alliances fly into Seattle. Some airlines buy their planes there.

Q18: Are direct flights from the cities above flown into your local airport?

All American hubs, as well as many other regional or large American cities connect directly to Seattle, and many international airlines also fly direct to Seattle.

Q19: 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, shared ride service (Lyft/Uber/etc.), and taxi from that airport/train station?

The DoubleTree is across the parking lot from SeaTac Airport. (0.7 miles). There is a free hotel shuttle, or it's a 14-minute walk.

Q20: What is the visa situation for citizens of foreign countries to attend your convention? What countries are eligible for ESTAs (Electronic Travel Authorizations which are generally a formality)? What countries would require visas? How long does it normally take to get a visa, and what does it cost?

Citizens of the United States, Canada, and Mexico can travel to Seattle without a visa. Citizens from dozens of European and other countries may travel to the US without a visa but an ESTA is required. We refer travelers from other countries to travel.state.gov for visa or other requirements.

Facilities

Q21: What hotel(s) are being used for the convention?

DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport

Q22: How many rooms, what type, accessibility issues, etc.?

The DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport has 850 rooms. It is fully accessible, with rooms with accessible bathrooms. There are plenty of rooms for our needs, and thousands of rooms at nearby hotels if we really need them.

Q23: What are your hotel room rates?

\$119

Q24: Do these rates include breakfast?

No.

Q25: Do they include internet access in the room?

Yes.

Q26: How firm are these rates?

Contracted. That is the rate.

Q27: What additional taxes and fees are there?

The sales tax rate is 10.1%, and the hotel occupancy tax rate is 2.4%, plus a \$2.00 TPA.

Q28: What does parking cost at your main hotel and/or convention center?

\$14 a day.

Q29: Do you have a signed (contingent) contract or letter of intent specifying the above?

Yes.

Q30: What is the distance from the nearest door of your main hotel(s) to the closest entrance of the convention site?

The hotel is the convention site.

Q31: What are the transportation options for those who prefer not to walk or who have mobility difficulties?

Free hotel shuttle. Sound Transit LINK light rail is also fully accessible.

Q32: Where will your large events be held?

Cascade rooms 9/10.

Q33: Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.

The hotel restaurant is reasonably priced and is very accustomed to serving large fannish gatherings. There are over a dozen restaurants within an easy walk, ranging from fast food to interesting mid-range restaurants. Beyond that, there are many restaurants of all types within a short taxi/Uber ride.

Q34: What arrangements will be made for evening socializing and party space? Do you have a corkage waiver?

We have the Presidential Suite as our main hospitality space. We have a corkage waiver, and we will look into obtaining a WA banquet permit in order to serve alcohol.

Q35: Please describe the policies / laws regarding smoking in your hotel(s), convention center, and city.

Smoking is not permitted indoors or within 25 feet of building entrances.

Miscellaneous

Q36: What type of weather can we expect during your convention? What is the average temperature during that time of year?

Seattle is not as rainy as its reputation, but a good hat or an umbrella is a good idea if you plan to spend a lot of time outdoors in December. Typical December temperatures have highs in the low 50s to lows in the high 30s. Snow is uncommon this early in the season.

Q37: What are some of the main tourist attractions of your city?

Our favorite spots include the Museum of Pop Culture, Pike Place Market, and the waterfront. Seattle has a wonderfully diverse array of cuisines; it is world-famous for salmon, seafood and for many Asian and Pacific cuisines. There are many boat, bus, and walking tours of Seattle, including ghost tours, pub crawls, a seafood tasting tour, and a very quirky historical underground tour featuring pirates, prostitutes, and exploding toilets!

Q38: Are you planning to have any membership discounts for certain demographic groups, such as historically marginalized groups, young adults, seniors, or military?

Currently, a first-time SMOFcon attendee discount is being considered, as well as discounts for members of marginalized groups. We are still exploring this topic and have not yet finalized details.

Q39: How do you plan to recruit staff? Will there be a discount membership rate for staff? Do you plan crash space for staff? Etc.

We have a good core committee, and we expect no difficulty recruiting additional staff.

Q40: What is your vision for your convention?

As a community, we want to not repeat our mistakes. Worldcons and other conventions have traditionally had problems with marketing, internal communication, recruiting, volunteer retention, social media, and documenting our accomplishments. We want to share and learn about best practices, and also some what-not-to-do examples we can avoid.

Q41: How do you plan to make it happen?

We are looking to invite a special guest keynote speaker with unique experience with some of these issues. Our committee will also draw on decades of experience in conrunning challenges faced in the past for discussion or presentation topics.

We are also planning to have a program item on furry conventions led by a genre-prominent organizer.

Q42: What is a notable aspect of your local fan culture and how do you plan to incorporate it into your convention?

Seattle fandom is very diverse and, even compared to most other places, is geeky and techie, as well as a bit younger on average than some other large fannish communities. Gaming is big, and some prominent game companies are based here. We also have a lot of furries, steampunkers, and many other groups that would not be considered traditional fandom in other areas.

SWOC for many years at ConComCon, our local conrunning convention, has had a tradition of offering a comped membership to each organized concom as a way of reaching out to and including them and their ideas. We have already been contacted by the local furry convention about a couple of program ideas, and we will be reaching out to other groups.

Q43: Do you have a code of conduct? If so, is it available online and if so, where?

The Code of Conduct has been posted to our website.

Q44: What do diversity and inclusion mean to you?

There is a lot of diversity in Northwest fandom. There isn't a single answer to this question. Smofcon is a peer event for learning and sharing knowledge and we hope to help people learn what does and doesn't work in our communities.

Q45: How are you working towards your goals in these areas?

We plan to foster discussion and education among our membership and community. We also plan to reach out to underrepresented communities to include them in our plans and activities.

Q46: What would concrete achievements look like in these areas?

We plan to schedule discussions on this subject to learn from each other about best practices and less positive outcomes that have occurred in the past. Seattle fandom is a community has a more diverse population than many other regions, and we expect to see a wider range of backgrounds, interests, and discussions that at some other SMOFCons.

Q47: What are your plans, if any, regarding handling the COVID-19 pandemic?

We will defer to state and municipal public health recommendations, as well as best practices at other conventions. We expect to finalize a policy in the summer of 2024. Based on current experience, it seems likely that we may be requiring proof of vaccination and masks in public convention spaces.

Q48: Have you planned for a virtual component to your convention?

We will learn from the experience of Smofcon 40 and we will turn to those with experience both with SMOFCon and Northwest-area conventions.

Q49: If applicable, are you prepared to run a site selection process should it be required?

Yes.

Q50: If applicable, how do you plan to facilitate the Hugo Finalists input to your convention?

TBA!

Q51: Is there anything else you wish to add?

Not at this time, but we are happy to answer questions.