

# AGA POLICY STATEMENT

ON

## CONDUCT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ANNUAL GO CONGRESS

Effective January 1, 2008

The annual Go Congress is the AGA's largest and most public Go event in North America. More than 20 years of successful AGA Congresses managed by chapters have produced numerous valuable lessons to be shared with future organizers. The Congress continues to grow annually in total attendance and revenue generated. With more people attending each year, including a growing number of foreigners and American youth, it is in the best interests of the AGA and the American Go community that chapters hosting a Congress have clear guidance on the standards of conduct expected of them in terms of event planning, management and performance. This policy document is intended to express guidance on recurring issues in general terms. It is not intended to be a substitute for or restrict the judgment and discretion of the hosting chapters in running the Congress. Separately, there is a wealth of detailed information available at the AGA's website at [usgo.org/congress/howtorunacongress.html](http://usgo.org/congress/howtorunacongress.html) to help all interested parties.

### Event Organizers/Management Team

As the annual Congress grows in size and complexity, it is more important than ever for hosting chapters to have an experienced, responsible and committed team. Hosting the Congress requires an enormous amount of work to plan, coordinate, manage and complete the event. The AGA does not have special volunteers to provide support to a Congresses at the local level. There is a Congress Liaison who helps local chapters understand the process and connect them to available AGA resources. But the local chapters must form a team of local volunteers to carry out the work on the ground for a Congress to happen as planned. If a chapter is interested in making a bid for hosting a Congress, their presentation should have solid information on their "Congress team", i.e., be able to identify by name the people on the team, their relevant experience and assigned roles. More volunteers will naturally be added as the event approaches, and some may drop out, a solid team has to be established at least a year before the proposed Congress. If that is not evident by the time the presentation is delivered, it will be difficult to consider the chapter ready.

### Making the Presentation to the General Assembly

Each year at the Congress, interested chapters make a presentation to the General Assembly to host the Congress the following calendar year. To improve the value of the proposals and to better inform the General Assemblies, interested chapters should deliver to the Congress Liaison at least 60 days before the Congress starts a draft of the presentation. If more than one chapter is interested in presenting a proposal at the same General Assembly, then early presentations will help minimize conflicts and coordinate the proposals. In consultation with the Congress Liaison, the proposal should then be given to the AGA President at least 30 days before the Congress starts. The President will review and share the draft with other AGA executives as needed, and provide appropriate feedback before the Congress begins. This early review is intended to give

the chapter representatives an opportunity to add or clarify materials to improve the presentation for the General Assembly. If the presentation material is substantially incomplete and it is apparent to the AGA executives that the interested chapter is not sufficiently organized by then, then the President may disallow the presentation for the General Assembly.

### Securing a Venue

The annual Congress needs a large venue to accommodate hundreds of players, families, and other visitors, daily meals, meeting rooms, lecture halls, multiple playing areas, teaching space and vendors. Venue costs are the largest single cost in the entire Congress and are secured by contract. The Congress organizers are expected to seek multiple venues, conduct thorough inspections and evaluations and compare features and prices. Reasonable negotiations with venues by the local chapter representative are expected in order to maximize benefits and reduce the cost while obtaining a balance of suitable accommodations, meal plans and facilities. The AGA President and Congress liaison will be available to provide support and historical information for comparison during negotiations. The venue contracts are to be reviewed, approved and signed by the AGA President unless authority is delegated. The venue contract should be signed, with deposit money settled, as soon as possible after the hosting chapter receives approval to host the Congress at the General Assembly.

### Financial Resources and Accounting

Substantial sums of money flow through the accounts of the AGA and the hosting chapter for each Congress. Therefore, the Congress team must have a designated Treasurer and the Treasurer should have at least a modest understanding of accounting and/or bookkeeping experience. The Congress Team must provide a break-even proposal including proposed registration fees, accommodation costs, meal plans and other major expenses for persons attending. Information on local transportation between the venue and the closest airport(s), local restaurants and entertainment and other points of interest are expected in the presentation. There are model spreadsheets already in use to help calculate break-even attendance. Several price points and attendance options should be generated.

Each Congress is required to have insurance to cover public liability. The AGA does not provide a blanket insurance policy for the Congresses and each organizer has to acquire a one-event policy. Information on prior year insurers should be available from former Congress organizers.

Normally, venues are reserved a year or more in advance and deposits are often required to secure the space. If the hosting chapter does not have the resources to make the deposit on its own, the AGA will advance the deposit funds. The advance will be refunded from Congress registration fees received before the Congress begins. The deposit is credited to the total venue cost and is reflected in the total Congress costs.

To the extent the Congress host needs assistance in setting up a credit card account to accept payments at the event, as opposed to advance online registration, the AGA will support these efforts with appropriate AGA corporate letters and signatures. The details should be researched

well in advance and the AGA Treasurer should be consulted and advised on the merchant or other account chosen.

Finally, although it is highly unlikely, it is possible that a Congress fails to cover its expenses and incurs a deficit. In that case, the AGA stands behind the hosting chapter and will cover actual expenses that exceed revenue, on the condition that the deficit was not caused by gross mismanagement, fraud or theft by the hosting chapter and volunteers. Precautions are expected from the Congress organizers to manage cash and checks carefully as well as limit access to local bank accounts set up for the Congress. The prospects of a deficit should be clear before the start of the Congress as it will usually be evident from exceptionally and unexpectedly low attendance numbers. All reasonable measures should be taken to mitigate the impact of low turnouts and the AGA President and Treasurer should be alerted as soon as possible if a deficit seems likely.

### The Treasurer

The Congress Treasurer needs to set up bank accounts early and with appropriate signatories as soon as possible. He/she needs to collaborate with the AGA Treasurer very early in the process to begin coordinating payments for deposits, materials, etc. Management of the Congress cash flow, revenue and expense accounting, ING funds, handling of donations, and other financial matters should be discussed in full with the AGA Treasurer well in advance of the event. There are model accounts, financial statements and final reports from prior Congresses that would be useful templates to the Congress Treasurer.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Congress Treasurer is to create the final Congress income statement. While it may be months until the very last expense account is closed out, the AGA Board and President expect to receive a preliminary estimate of the surplus/deficit of the Congress within 40 days of the end of the Congress. The final financial report should be done within 90 days after the end of the Congress. Any remaining accounts receivable or payable should be shown on the balance sheet and collected or paid as soon as possible. Whether to keep a local bank account open for these final matters should be worked out between the two Treasurers.

### Physical Safety and Security

A priority for the AGA is to have appropriate measures in place to assure a safe and secure event for everyone. It is understood that event organizers have limited control over the facilities used or the campuses on which they operate, and the Congress Team is not expected to invest in acquiring physical security equipment and devices. However, reasonable security precautions must be taken. For example, youth rooms need adult monitors, local law enforcement should be contacted and made aware of the Congress event, emergency contact information must be obtained and made available, local medical and hospital services should be identified for emergencies, first aid supplies should be on-site. Also, special precautions may be required if event organizers receive reliable information about specific threats by or against individuals. In case of doubt, the event organizers should contact the Congress Liaison and AGA President as soon as an issue arises for guidance on how to respond.