

About Contest Food and Decorations

Food Chair — first, find out from the Contest Chair

- a. where the contest is
- b. whether the food will be brought in or provided onsite
- c. what the food budget is
- d. how many people you are planning to serve
- e. what time food service will begin

Some venues (such as Xerox) require you to use the company caterer. Others permit you to bring food into the facility.

Food Choice Considerations

1. Look for food that is tasty, cheap and reasonably healthy. Popular choices are pizza, submarine sandwiches or wraps, pasta salads, Pollo Loco®, Chinese food, Middle-Eastern food, finger food or home-cooked food provided by several individuals. In the past, Panda Express® has generously donated food to several contests, and Starbucks® has donated coffee.
2. Look for local restaurants, farmers' market stalls or individuals who do catering; they may give you a break on price in exchange for promotion.
3. Remember to provide some veggie alternatives.
4. When planning your menu, try to minimize red meat, salt, sugar, fat, onions, pepper, chiles, curry, cilantro, shellfish, strong cheeses, etc. so that more people can enjoy the food. And for religious reasons, avoid pork or food cooked with alcohol. (Serve flavorings on the side.)
5. Sodas are expensive (and heavy)! For the best deal on sodas, go to 99¢ Stores®. Consider serving just water, tea and coffee.
6. Keep desserts very simple. Cakes can be expensive and hard to transport, and they require forks and plates. Cookies work well.
7. Food should be served 30-45 minutes before the contest begins.
8. Visit the facility and find out if there's a kitchen, sink, garbage disposal, microwave, refrigerator, coffee-pot, etc. that you may use.
9. Ask the Area Governors who have already held their contests if you can "inherit" any leftover paper goods, condiments, serving implements, plastic wrap, tin foil, coffee, teabags, etc.

Decorations Chair — first, find out from the Contest Chair

- a. where the contest is
- b. what the theme and colors are
- c. what the decoration budget is
- d. what time people will start arriving

Decoration Considerations

1. Visit the contest location before you invest in any decorations. Ask the facilities manager about decorating rules — what can go where and what materials are permitted.
2. Remind AG to remind clubs to bring their banners, and plan to display them prominently.
3. Keep decorations moderately priced, tasteful and unobtrusive, complementing the contest theme. Balloons are expensive and can obscure people's sightlines. No flowers are preferable to fake flowers. Don't strew glitter or confetti unless you plan to vacuum before leaving.
4. Visit your local art supply store and buy a roll of 3-M "artists' white printable flatback paper tape". This special tape will not damage painted walls or leave a gluey residue. A roll is expensive (about \$13) but will last for years.
5. The Decorations Committee may also assume some responsibility for Set-Up and surely will need to help with Clean-Up. Get some tall and *strong* folks on this committee!

TEAMWORK

Food + Decorations

Food Chair and Decorations Chair should get together well in advance and work out who is responsible for buying and bringing tablecloths, napkins, paper plates and tableware. Generally it is best to be economical with such things, and not buy expensive color-matched items.

Decorations + SAA + Greeting + Set-Up/Clean-Up + Raffle

Together, determine who is making directional signs and restroom signs. Decide if raffle price information goes on tables, what it will look like and who will create it.

Food + Decorations + SAA + Set-Up/Clean-Up

You are all jointly responsible for leaving the facility as clean and neat as you found it.

TIMING

The Decorations team should arrive at least 90 minutes before the doors open for guests. Be sure to prepare a place for the food set-up; make sure there are outlets nearby for the coffee-pot and enough room for a buffet.

Food Committee should arrive 60 minutes before the food service is scheduled to begin. Start the coffee perking right away so it's ready by the time other committee people come. Keep food covered until SAA announces that food service is beginning.

Tip: the Food Committee might want to bring some smaller containers, tin foil or plastic wrap for leftover food. And always bring garbage bags.

REIMBURSEMENTS

1. Keep all your receipts—you cannot get reimbursed without them.
2. If the Division Treasurer is at the contest, he or she will write you a reimbursement check as soon as the contest is over. You will need to fill out a “reimbursement request form” and present a dated receipt. Please do not ask for cash reimbursement; it is against the rules.
3. If the Division Treasurer is not present, fill out a “reimbursement request form” and give your receipts to the Area Governor or Contest Chair, or mail to the Division Treasurer.