



## Contact Your Illinois Expert: Our local Convention and Visitors Bureaus!

### WHAT IS A CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (CVB)?

Convention & Visitors Bureaus are not-for-profit organizations sharing the mission of enticing visitors to the destination each serves. In addition to individuals seeking a vacation, weekend getaway or, simply, a day away from home, visitors are also attendees of conventions, meetings, sports events and motorcoach trips.

### THINK OF CVBs AS A LOCAL "ONLINE DIRECTORY"!

A CVB's staff of hospitality professionals is trained to maintain existing and establish new relationships with event planners for the purpose of providing them with unbiased destination and support service information. CVB services—almost always complimentary—are designed to match planner and attendee needs to the destination's amenities and resources, resulting in streamlined, timesaving efficiencies for the planner, enhanced ROI for the organizations hosting their event.

### HOW CVBs DO WHAT THEY DO...

Though CVBs have existed since the late 1800s, many planners don't know they exist! The services provided by each bureau vary somewhat; however, resources typically include the following:

- **Destination Expertise** – RFP distribution, site inspections, provision of print and web-based marketing materials
- **Bid Development** – competitive analysis, liaison with convention center, hotels, meeting venues
- **Convention Planning** – welcome letters, local media contacts, street signage, identification of support services
- **Attendance Building** – media release creation, dedicated web landing pages, attendance boosters, and telemarketing services
- **On-site Support** – supply visitor's guides, city maps, registration booths and support, name badges, welcome banners, attendee "goodie bag" materials

### HOW DO PLANNERS BENEFIT?

Meeting and event planners oversee hundreds of tasks and, by reaching out to the Illinois' CVBs they will receive help with the following:

- **Time Savings** – identifying the appropriate venue, rates and availability within planner's timeframe and budget
- **Financial Savings** – complimentary products and services, maximizing value dates/meeting patterns, individual CVB promotions designed to enhance event bottom lines

- **Simplicity** – bids gathered from hotels in standardized formats. CVBs can receive all RFPs on behalf of the planner.
- **Unbiased Expertise** – providing a wide range of updated information on existing facilities and activities, and education regarding new hotels/meeting venue locations and off-site activities
- **Unique Destination Perspective** – providing information on airlift, weather, city-wide meetings and community events

#### **CVBs CAN BE MISUNDERSTOOD! CVBs...**

- **Are NOT “middle men” who increase costs** – CVBs receive no commission or client fees for booking business
- **Do NOT serve city-wide conventions only** – Most bureaus have sales professionals dedicated to meetings for 200 or less attendees
- **Do NOT distribute leads to everyone** – CVBs have the flexibility to send RFPs only to those venues requested BY THE PLANNER. Additionally, CVBs will, upon request, maintain the planner's anonymity by collecting, on behalf of the planner, all initial proposals
- **Absolutely ARE accountable** – CVBs are funded with public dollars—and, in some cases, membership dollars—and are responsible to document the impact their activities have on the economic health of the destination they serve. Bureaus track the number of potential pieces of business they identify, the number of hotel room nights they book and the amount of people they touch with their services.

The CVBs listed on [meetinillinois.com](http://meetinillinois.com) and in the Meeting Guide have been sorted by Illinois' four distinct tourism regions, and planners interested in bringing meetings to the Midwest and a particular Illinois region are encouraged to use these two resources to find the CVBs located within the desired region. Planners also can submit an RFP on the website which can be distributed quickly so that the appropriate CVB sale professionals can be in touch with you to help execute the meeting or event.