

Suggestions for Assembly Decorations Chairs

Thank you for volunteering as a Decorations Chair for a CNCA Assembly! Your role is crucial in creating a visually appealing and welcoming atmosphere that enhances the overall experience of the Assembly attendees.

Please Note: This document collects the shared experience of past Decoration Chairs. It is a supplement to, not a replacement of, the [CNCA Assembly Guidelines](#).

Responsibilities of the Decorations Chair:

- Procure affordable decorations and supplies while adhering to the bid budget.
- Recruit and schedule volunteers for installing and removing decorations before and after the Assembly.
- Prioritize safety and accessibility by placing decorations where they won't block paths or exits.
- Follow the venue's guidelines on approved materials, proper decoration placement, and acceptable attachment methods.

1. PROCURING DECORATIONS AND SUPPLIES

The decorations budget for an Assembly is minimal, typically \$100. Ask your Assembly Chair for the exact amount that was submitted when your District bid to host the Assembly. You can make a little money go far by coming up with creative and cost-effective solutions. For example, some host committees have borrowed decorations from their members or reused decorations from previous district, intergroup or community events.

When making purchases, check out a local creative reuse centers that recycles gently used teaching, art, and craft supplies. Here are just a few in our area:

[bits-n-bobs](#) (Santa Cruz, CA)

[Creative Reuse of Vallejo](#) (Vallejo, CA)

[Fabmo](#) (Sunnyvale, CA)

[Last Chance Mercantile](#) (Marina, CA)

[Makers Apron](#) (Eureka, CA)

[Reuse Arts and Crafts](#) (Berkeley, CA)

[SCRAP](#) (San Francisco, CA)

[The East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse](#) (Oakland, CA)

[The Legacy](#) (Sebastopol, CA)

[Urban Ore](#) (Berkeley, CA)

When purchasing new decorations or craft supplies, visit your local dollar store first (i.e. Dollar Tree, Dollar General) – they are typically more affordable than traditional retail stores like Michael's, Joanne's, Walmart, or Target. When shopping retail, remember many brand name stores do have a dollar section or clearance section where you can find hidden gems.

Here are some other things to keep in mind before making purchases:

- CHECK THE INVENTORY from the previous Assembly before making new purchases. Table covers, centerpieces, artificial flowers, crayons, and pipe-cleaners are frequently leftover after each Assembly.
- COLLECT RECEIPTS for all purchases and submit them to your Assembly Treasurer.
- COMPARE PRICES in advance and take advantage of sales, discount codes and coupons.

2. TABLE COVERS AND DÉCOR

Your decoration responsibility only extends to the banquet tables designated for district and general audience seating. The decoration of tables for food service, coffee, registration, and committee displays falls under the purview of their respective assembly committee chairs or area committee chairs.

As you plan the table decorations, ensure you have the following details, which can be acquired from your Assembly Chair or the Assembly Coordinator:

- BANQUET TABLE SHAPES: Identify if the tables are oblong (rectangular) or round in shape.
- TABLE DIMENSIONS: Obtain the dimensions, including both length and width for oblong tables or the diameter for round tables.
- TOTAL NUMBER OF BANQUET TABLES: Determine the overall count of banquet tables allocated for audience seating.

OBLONG TABLES: In the case of oblong banquet tables, experience has shown that covering the table with white kraft paper or butcher paper is a popular choice. This is a fast and cost-effective method to cover tables and also offers a coloring surface for attendees who might fidget. You can purchase large rolls of kraft paper or butcher paper from [Webstaurant Store](#), [Amazon](#) or [Uline](#).

Choose a paper roll size that matches the width of the banquet tables. For example, if the banquet tables are 30" x 96" (8 ft oblong), then get a roll of kraft/butcher paper that's

30" wide. This makes it easy to roll the paper along the connected banquet tables and secure it with blue painters or masking tape at both ends. It's not a good idea to buy a wider roll for extra on the sides because it makes setup more complicated when you have to fold over the long edges. PLEASE NOTE: Bulk paper rolls can be heavy, so have volunteers working in pairs or trios.

ROUND TABLES: Using kraft/butcher paper to cover round banquet tables isn't recommended. It adds extra setup time and work. While renting tablecloths from a party rental store is an option, it can be pricey, ranging from \$5 to \$15 per table, which might not be budget-friendly for an Assembly. Based on our experience, opting for affordable paper or plastic table covers from a dollar store is a better choice for round banquet tables.

3. FLOWERS AND PLANTS

Flowers and succulents are a popular choice for decorations but buying them from retail sources can quickly use up your budget. To save on costs, consider checking out wholesale flower markets and farmers markets. Here are a few local wholesale flower vendors in our area:

[San Francisco Flower Mart](#) (San Francisco, CA)

[Oakland Flower Mart](#) (Oakland, CA)

[United Wholesale Flowers](#) (San Jose, CA)

[Point West Wholesale Flower Market](#) (Rohnert Park, CA)

If you prefer retail options, places like Trader Joe's, Costco, Walmart, and Sam's Club offer affordable bouquets that can be divided into smaller arrangements.

ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS: For a fun and budget-friendly alternative, you can make your own paper flowers through DIY projects. There are plenty of tutorials available online. Keep in mind that you'll need to gather volunteers in advance. You can also buy artificial flowers – your local dollar store or creative reuse center are great places to find more affordable options.

A FINAL NOTE ON FLOWERS AND PLANTS: Whether you opt for fresh, artificial, or homemade flowers or plants, remember that arrangements don't need to be big to make an impact. Even small, thoughtfully placed bouquets can bring a lot of charm without breaking the bank. It's also completely okay to skip flowers altogether and focus your spending on simple table centerpieces.

4. GETTING REIMBURSED

The Area provides for all Assembly expenses, including decorations. The only exception is if your District decides to host an Assembly Dinner (see Section 7). Please consult

with your Assembly Treasurer about whether you will receive a cash or check advance from the District to make purchases, or if you will be reimbursed by the Area. You will need to submit receipts for reimbursement.

5. RECRUIT AND SCHEDULE VOLUNTEERS

Ask your Assembly Chair or Assembly Coordinator when the facility will be available for set-up. Sometimes the Area is able to rent the facility the night before the Assembly; other times set-up takes place the morning of the Assembly as early as 7:00am.

The number of volunteers you need for set-up will depend on the number of tables you will need to cover and decorate, the extent of your decoration plan and the amount of time available. Whenever possible, the Area tries to rent the venue for a few hours the night before the Assembly. However, this is not always possible and sometimes we have to set-up in the morning as early as 6:00am.

In cases, where the Assembly committee is responsible for setting up table and chairs, it is a good idea to collaborate with the Assembly Facilities Chair to consolidate volunteers into one set-up crew.

Tables should not be covered until the Facilities Chair and Assembly Coordinator have confirmed the proper set-up of the room. Once the tables are covered, it becomes difficult to move them.

6. SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Prioritize safety by ensuring decorations do not obstruct pathways, emergency exits, or areas for attendees with limited mobility. Also, keep in mind your centerpieces do not obstruct the view of the stage and speakers.

7. ADHERE TO VENUE GUIDELINES

It's crucial to follow the rules set by the venue, which are usually outlined in the rental agreement, when organizing an Assembly event. These guidelines specify what's allowed inside the venue, including what can be placed on walls and the types of adhesives that are permitted. You can easily obtain this essential information from your Assembly Chair or the Area Assembly Coordinator.

For instance, most venues don't allow the use of glitter or confetti because they can be quite challenging to clean up afterward. Even if they are permitted, the cleanup process can become burdensome. Also, some venues do not allow helium balloons inside the halls because they get loose and stay up in the ceiling for days after the event.

By adhering to these venue guidelines, we not only ensure the event runs smoothly but also demonstrate respect for the venue's regulations. This, in turn, fosters a positive and respectful relationship with the venue, which is valuable for future events.

8. ASSEMBLY DINNER

Some Districts opt to organize a ticketed banquet dinner along with an A.A. meeting on the evening before or after an Assembly. It's essential to understand that the Assembly Dinner is funded by the District and is entirely distinct from the Area assembly.

Based on past experiences, it's generally recommended that the Dinner has its own committee and separate volunteers. However, if you decide to manage the table decorations for the Dinner too, please ensure you make distinct purchases and keep separate receipts for the coffee supplies used at the Dinner and the A.A. meeting. This separation helps with financial tracking and coordination.

For the Assembly Dinner, using tablecloths is recommended. If the Dinner occurs in the same room and on the same tables as the Assembly, you can simply place plastic tablecloths over the paper-covered tables, which will save you time the next day. Since your District sets the budget for the Dinner, you can consult with the Dinner Chair on how much you have to spend on additional centerpieces.

Decorations, like recovery, is always best when we keep it simple!