

**American Bar Association
Section of Real Property Trust and Estate Law**

Statement on Meeting Location and Venue Selection

Introduction

The purpose of this Statement on Meeting Location and Venue Selection is to inform members of the principals that guide the city and venue selection of in-person meetings for the Section of Real Property Trust and Estate Law (“RPTE” or the “Section”) of the American Bar Association (“ABA”).

The ABA Section of Real Property Trust and Estate Law (“RPTE”) encourages RPTE leaders to travel to two in-person meetings per year – a leadership meeting and an annual CLE meeting. Under Article 4, Section 4.2(d) of RPTE’s bylaws, the Chair of RPTE selects the location and venue of these meetings. While this Statement applies to all in-person events and meetings, it is focused on the Fall Leadership Meeting and the National CLE Conference.

RPTE is committed to providing a positive experience for all meeting attendees regardless of their race, color, gender, social or religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, employment, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, or military status. This includes ensuring attendees: (1) are safe; (2) can obtain knowledge in real property and trust and estate law; (3) receive consistent experiences across meetings; (4) have an opportunity to engage with RPTE leaders and other attendees; and (5) can attend meetings without concern about conflicts with holidays (religious and secular) or other events that many members of RPTE might be attending.

Although providing a positive experience is the primary goal, RPTE cannot guarantee every attendee will have a trouble-free event and individual experiences may differ. Likewise, while RPTE strives to provide consistency across events, the purpose of the Fall Leadership Meeting is fundamentally different from the National CLE Conference.

The National CLE Conference is intended to provide continuing legal education and quality networking opportunities to general membership and non-members. Many of these conferences are in larger cities and venues to help attract and accommodate as many attendees as possible.

At the Fall Leadership Meeting, RPTE seeks fun and comfortable spaces for leaders while they meet with their Standing Committees or Substantive Groups to plan for the upcoming bar year. To do this, the Section Chair looks beyond the quality of the meeting and event space to the character of the location and venue and the level of amenities offered. As a result, the Fall Leadership Meeting often provides a unique experience or a resort-type venue that offers an enjoyable experience while leaders volunteer their time.

In this Statement on Meeting Location and Venue Selection, RPTE hopes to encourage a more transparent and thoughtful process while sharing the minimum meeting requirements of the ABA and the Section. This Statement describes:

- (1) The general framework for selecting locations and venues for RPTE meetings;
- (2) The minimum requirements for any location or venue considered for RPTE meetings;
- (3) The important, but not essential, criteria for RPTE meetings;
- (4) RPTE's considerations for cancelling a meeting.

General Framework

The meetings shall promote the mission of the ABA, the purposes of RPTE, and the goals of the meeting. In addition, the ABA Board of Governors has urged RPTE chairs to choose meeting sites which provide the greatest convenience for the persons attending and the greatest meeting economy for the ABA. Finally, RPTE seeks locations that provide new and interesting cultural and recreational activities for attendees to partake in their free time.

Due to the nature of a national organization, attending meetings and events will require many attendees to travel. RPTE's preference is to vary meeting locations. Varying locations allows RPTE to engage with local attorneys in many places. RPTE considers this a strategic investment in maximizing membership of the Section.

RPTE avoids long-term contracts with venues. While such contracts may provide savings on the cost of event venues, it limits the location options as no hotel chain has a venue capable of hosting RPTE meetings in all potential meeting locations.

The choice of a particular location or venue is not an endorsement of the politics, beliefs, economies, or laws of a state, city, venue, local governing official, or owner of a venue. Some locations are chosen years in advance, and RPTE cannot predict policy or legal changes, changes in elected officials, or changes in ownership of venues that may occur in the intervening time. Such long-term planning helps with financing, cost control, and enables RPTE members to plan their attendance.

The ABA is an advocacy organization. RPTE will use its meetings to advocate for its members and the Section's values. This includes reserving time for CLE programming on diversity, equity, and inclusion. By using RPTE meetings to educate the local bar and to advocate for the Section's values, RPTE believes it can have a more positive impact on local policies than simply refusing to engage with locations where the local population or a governing official may not share the same values.

Finally, the ABA and RPTE do not boycott or prohibit having meetings in certain locations. RPTE represents attorneys throughout the United States and its territories. All members should have the opportunity to attend a conveniently located RPTE meeting.

Minimum Requirements

Health and Safety Requirements

The meeting location and venue must be safe for all attendees regardless race, color, gender, social or religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, employment, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, military status, or any other attribute. For this reason, RPTE prioritizes locations and venues with expansive non-discrimination laws and policies. Likewise, RPTE will not expose attendees to life threatening illnesses or diseases.

Every location carries some health or safety risk. This policy does not alleviate attendees' need to do their own due diligence or seek medical advice for their individual situations.

Space and Infrastructure Requirements

The location and venue must be able to safely accommodate the expected number of attendees. This means that the meeting hotel must be able accommodate the expected number of attendees or the location must have additional hotels near the event space that can accommodate overflow. The venue must have enough meeting rooms of sufficient size for RPTE committees and Section Council to conduct business over the course of the meeting. The meeting rooms must be accessible for all attendees including those with physical disabilities. Finally, the venue must have sufficient event space to host events without breaching maximum occupancy limits, and the event space must have seating capacity appropriate for the size and type of event.

Additionally, the venue must meet the infrastructure requirements for RPTE events. This includes technical requirements, such as microphones, internet connectivity, and projectors. The venue must have the ability to prepare meals for attendees, provide storage for RPTE's materials and equipment, and do anything else that is required for the meeting.

Important Criteria

Costs

The ABA is a premier organization, and RPTE is dedicated to serving those members who practice real property or trust and estate law. The Section attracts attorneys at the top of the profession – including those at large, medium, and small firms, family offices, financial institutions, title companies, governmental organizations, and non-profit legal services organizations. The location and venue must be deemed acceptable to most potential attendees.

RPTE is also fiscally responsible, and the Section budgets for meetings accordingly. It recognizes the costs to attendees who may not be reimbursed by their employers or the Section. RPTE members should not be required to overextend their own budgets or employer reimbursement policies to attend.

RPTE attempts to balance these competing factors in selecting a location and venue by avoiding those deemed too cheap or overly expensive. RPTE encourages potential attendees with demonstrable financial need, new and young lawyers, government lawyers, and solo practitioners to seek financial assistance through ABA and Section Scholarships, Fellowships, and the Section Development Fund.

Travel

RPTE is a volunteer organization, and it knows attorneys must use valuable time to travel to and attend meetings. As stated in the general framework, RPTE varies the locations of its meetings, and travel time will be unavoidable for most attendees. To minimize this, RPTE tries to select locations with international airports to help attendees avoid multiple connecting flights or avoid having to use multiple modes of transportation to arrive at a destination.

Cancellation

Because RPTE meetings are planned years in advance, a change in circumstances in the selected location or venue may require a cancellation if the minimum requirements described in this statement can no longer be met.

The primary focus in determining whether to cancel an event is on the health and safety of attendees. RPTE considers cancelling an event or meeting when the location experiences one of the following close in time to the event or meeting:

- Natural disaster (flood, fire, tornado, hurricane, etc.);
- Terrorist attack or similar event;
- Epidemic or pandemic outbreak; or
- Any other significant event that jeopardizes the health or safety of attendees.

Before cancelling an event, RPTE will closely monitor the situation and attempt to find an alternative location. But RPTE does not have or select back-up locations in the regular course, and cancellation may be unavoidable.

Likewise when a location is viable for a meeting, but the selected venue no longer meets the space and infrastructure requirements, RPTE will work to find an alternative venue for the meeting or event in the same or nearby location.