

Accessibility Information for Annual Meetings

AAR members with disabilities or any attendees who may have difficulty getting around the meeting are encouraged to note this during registration, as well as on the housing section of registration if applicable. AAR will make every reasonable attempt to accommodate you, whether by arranging services such as sign language interpreters, assigning accessible hotel room space, or through the AAR & SBL's taxi reimbursement policy. Please contact Soraya Shahrak, Associate Director of Meetings, at SShahrak@aarweb.org if you have any questions.

Getting Around the 2016 Annual Meeting, San Antonio

Primary Meeting Locations

Most AAR and SBL sessions will be held in four locations—the San Antonio Convention Center, Grand Hyatt, Marriott Rivercenter, and the Marriott Riverwalk. The Employment Center will be located at the Convention Center. Additional meetings and receptions will be primarily held at the Hilton Palacio del Rio and Hyatt Regency Riverwalk.

San Antonio is a beautiful, historic city with two levels in the downtown area. There is a typical street level and there is also a Riverwalk that is one story below the street. There are a lot of restaurants and a few shops on it with two pedestrian walkways on either side of the river.

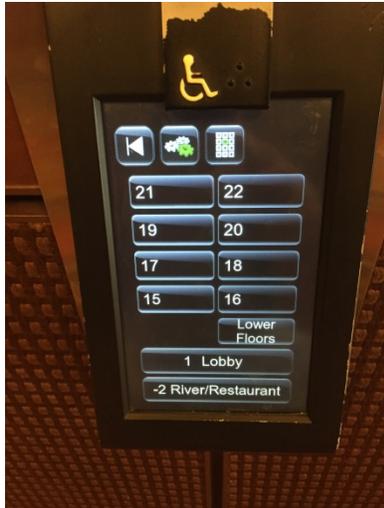
Since the Convention Center is vast, be sure to note the signage indicating where you will want to go. A sign in the main front door entrance (on the east side of the building) will direct you to an elevator leading to the dedicated Persons with Disabilities (PWD) room, 224, or other elevators to additional meeting rooms on the 2nd or 3rd floors.

Although the Grand Hyatt is adjacent to the Convention Center, you must go outside to access the Center. For most locations in the Convention Center, exit the main Grand Hyatt doors (on the east side, by the parking entrance), turn right and walk a long block to the Center's main entrance. However, if you are going to the Convention Center River Level, take the elevator on the west side of the Grand Hyatt (leading to Ruth's Chris Steakhouse) down one level and then outside, turning left. Some 2nd floor Meeting Level rooms are also easily accessed this way. Be sure to check the map to see which side of the Center your meeting room is on.

The Marriott Riverwalk is across the street from the Grand Hyatt. There is a talking crosswalk, accessible for people with visual disabilities.

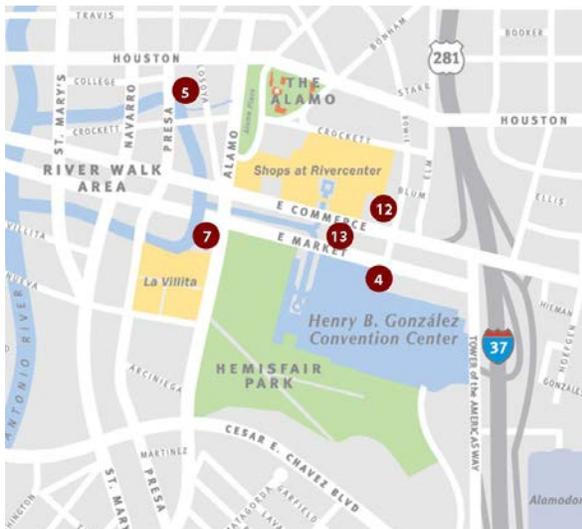
To get to the Marriott Rivercenter from the Grand Hyatt, travel through the Marriott Riverwalk and cross the street (at another talking crosswalk). You will enter in the side of the hotel. Use the guestroom elevators by the front desk to access the 3rd floor meeting space. If you wish to access the San Antonio Riverwalk, the elevators to go down are at the back of the hotel.

The Hilton is 0.4 miles from the Convention Center. The elevators don't have standard push buttons. Attendees must use an electronic console to indicate what floor you will travel to. You must know and commit to which floor you need to go to before entering the elevator, as there aren't standard buttons on the inside. If desired, there is an option to read each of the options aloud. To utilize this, push the large accessibility icon at the top of the console. Once you hear the floor read aloud you'd like to travel to, push the accessibility icon again to select your desired floor.



The Hyatt Regency is 0.5 miles from the Convention Center. It has an open atrium lobby, which generates ambient noise. (If you have booked a sleeping room in the Hyatt Regency and ambient noise presents an accessibility problem, please contact reg@aarweb.org to see if you can be accommodated in a different hotel.) It has a separate elevator to access the meeting space versus the Riverwalk. As you come in the front doors, the meeting space elevator is just ahead, to the right. The Riverwalk elevator is to the left, across from the front desk, by the atrium window.

- Grand Hyatt #4
- Marriott Riverwalk #13
- Marriott Rivercenter #12
- Hilton #7
- Hyatt Regency #5



Getting to and Around on the Riverwalk

While the Riverwalk is beautiful and has a lot of restaurants on it, when you're traveling to meeting space in various hotels, the street level is a lot more efficient to get from point A to B. When exploring the city in the evenings, the Riverwalk is scenic, although it has gentle inclines.

Due to safety concerns, the hotels lock their doors that connect to the Riverwalk during designated hours. If you are staying in that hotel, you can use your sleeping room card key to access the hotel. If you find yourself on the Riverwalk and need to get back to street level to access another hotel past the hours listed below, there are public elevators throughout the Riverwalk that are 24 hours. One of the most convenient public elevators for AAR members is by the Hilton, across from San Antonio's iconic dark orange "Friendship Torch" sculpture. See here for all of the public

elevators: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/DAO/RiverWalkMap-RiverBend.pdf>.

- Grand Hyatt – doors outside of Ruth's Chris Steakhouse locked from midnight to 6 am
- Marriott Riverwalk – doors locked from 10 pm to 6 am
- Marriott Rivercenter – doors locked from 10 pm to 7 am
- Hilton – doors locked 24 hours
- Hyatt Regency – doors locked from 10 pm to 6 am

More materials can be found

here: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/DAO/PublicationsandMaps/RiverWalkMapsandAccessibility.aspx>.

No Shuttle Service between the Convention Center and Other Hotels

AAR no longer provides shuttle bus service at the annual meeting.

Taxi Reimbursement

AAR & SBL will reimburse attendees with disabilities for the cost of a private taxi or ride-share service to travel between official AAR meeting locations, if needed. To receive the reimbursement, please submit all receipts with a letter detailing the nature of your disability, your departure point, and your destination. Only travel between official Annual Meeting locations (i.e., hotels and convention center) will be covered.

Questions may be directed to SShaharak@aarweb.org.

Wheelchair or Electric Scooter Rental

Attendees who wish to rent a wheelchair or electric scooter for use during the Annual Meeting are welcome to contact the following provider to arrange for service:

Tom's Wheelchair and Scooter Rentals (<http://www.tomswheelchairs.com/home.html>) is offering attendees a special rate for the Annual Meeting. Please be sure to tell them that you are with the AAR & SBL to get 10% off your reservation. Manual wheelchairs are \$25 for 1 day, \$40 for 2 days, or \$50 for 3 to 7 days. Electric scooters are \$50 for 1 day or \$200 for 4 to 7 days. Tom's Wheelchair and Scooter Rentals will deliver and pick up the wheelchair or scooter to your hotel complimentary. **Please call Tom's Wheelchair and Scooter Rentals at 210-223-7878 or email tomswheelchair@sbcglobal.net to make individual arrangements.** They suggest that you make your reservation as soon as possible to ensure availability.

Onsite Accessibility Issues

Should you encounter an accessibility issue at the Annual Meeting, please notify the hotel's front desk so they can get the issue resolved. You may also report the problem at the AAR & SBL Registration Desk (located outside of Hall 1 in the Convention Center) Friday 11 am to 6 pm, Saturday through Monday 8 am to 5:30 pm, and Tuesday 8 to 10 am, or email reg@aarweb.org.

Food at the Annual Meeting

The Rivercenter Mall can provide fast and inexpensive meal options for attendees and is open Monday through Saturday 10 am to 9 pm and Sunday noon to 6 pm. The easiest way to get to the food court is to exit the Marriott Rivercenter in the rear of the building on the lobby level, as if you're going to the Riverwalk. Once exiting the Marriott, turn right and travel a short distance directly into the food court.

Annual Meeting Program Accessibility

ASL Interpreter Services

AAR provides interpreter services for attendees who request ASL interpretation in advance of the meeting. To request interpreter service, contact AAR at annualmeeting@aarweb.org **no later than September 1** to ensure that AAR has sufficient time to arrange for appropriate interpreters. If members inform AAR about their anticipated attendance at particular sessions, AAR staff will coordinate with presenters and session presiders to secure advance copies of papers for interpreters.

Assisted Listening System

We can equip any conference meeting room with an assisted listening system. AAR will provide receivers to attendees who request them in advance. If you would like to make use of this service, please email Soraya Shahrak at SShahrak@aarweb.org **by November 14**.

Assisted listening services will be available in Convention Center Room 224, the room designated for sessions sponsored by the Religion and Disability Studies Group and the Committee on the Status of People with Disabilities. Advance notice is needed to provide assistive listening device support in other Marriott rooms. If you would like to use the system, please provide us with a schedule of sessions and their room numbers as soon as possible so that the technology can be set up in advance for the sessions.

Accessible Presentations

AAR encourages all presenters and presiders to make their presentations fully accessible to attendees with disabilities. The following guidelines suggest best practices for accessible presentations: <https://www.aarweb.org/annual-meeting/guidelines-for-accessible-presentations>.

Materials in Alternative Format

Attendees who need materials in alternative formats should contact the presenters directly. If you need contact information, please email annualmeeting@aarweb.org. If members inform AAR about their needs and their anticipated attendance at particular sessions, AAR staff will do their best to coordinate with presenters and session presiders to facilitate the availability of handouts or other session materials in alternative formats.

Accessibility for Presenters

The room format for AAR sessions commonly includes a podium with a microphone designed for standing presentations. At the Convention Center two rooms, Stars at Night 1 and Stars at Night 4, will have a riser for the head table. The rest of the head tables will be on the floor. Presenters who need an alternative format (such as a tabletop microphone or podium) or who anticipate a problem with the riser should contact annualmeeting@aarweb.org to arrange for appropriate presentation technology.

Meeting Room Accessibility

All sessions at the AAR are accessible to attendees using wheelchairs. Meeting room chairs will be arranged to ensure two open spaces for attendees using wheelchairs.

Designated Room for Religion and Disability Studies Group Sessions

AAR has scheduled all sessions sponsored/cosponsored by the Religion and Disability Studies Group and the AAR Status of People with Disabilities in the Profession Committee in the same room at the Convention Center, Room 224.

Sighted Guide or Mobility Assistance

Attendees who need a sighted guide or other mobility assistance to navigate the annual meeting should email Soraya Shahrak at SShahrak@aarweb.org **by November 14**.

Volunteer to Assist Your Colleagues

Are you able to devote a few hours of your time at the annual meeting to assist a colleague? Please contact Soraya Shahrak at SShahrak@aarweb.org if you are able to serve as a sighted guide or to provide mobility assistance during a portion of the meeting.

Employment Center Accessibility

AAR is committed to maximizing accessibility for employers and job seekers who are making use of the Employment Center. AAR can arrange for a quiet booth, to minimize noise or distraction from adjacent booths, or may be able to arrange for a private interview room if space is available. If you need a quiet room or have other accessibility needs, please contact careers@aarsbl.org as soon as possible so that we can adequately accommodate you.

Status of People with Disabilities in the Profession Committee

AAR has a [Committee on the Status of People with Disabilities in the Profession \(PWD\)](#), which works to assure the full access of people with disabilities within the Academy and to advance their status within the profession. This year, the PWD Committee will co-sponsor three sessions:

- “Intersectional Scholarship and Activism: A Conversation with Alison Kafer, Author of *Feminist, Queer, Crip*,” Sunday 9 to 11:30 am in Convention Center 224, co-sponsored with the Status of LGBTIQ Persons in the Profession Committee.
- “Precarious Lives: Economy, Identity, and Luck in Contemporary Academia,” Sunday 1 to 3:30 pm in Convention Center 224, co-sponsored with the Academic Relations Committee, the Contingent Faculty Task Force, and the Status of Women in the Profession.
- “Black Liberation Theologies of Disability,” Monday 9 to 11:30 am in Convention Center Stars at Night 4, co-sponsored with the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee.

The committee will host a luncheon, “Connecting Conversations,” on Monday 11:45 am to 12:45 pm in Convention Center 225A, immediately after the session on “Black Liberation Theologies of Disability.” Registration for the lunch costs \$13 and is limited to 60 people. Advanced registration is required and can be done while you are registering online. If you have already completed registration, contact reg@aarweb.org. The committee will also hold a pre-conference workshop, “Teaching Religion and Disability Studies: An Interactive Workshop on Curriculum & Pedagogy” on Friday, from 1 to 5 pm in Convention Center 209. Registration for the workshop costs \$35 and is limited to 35 people. Advanced registration is required and can be done while you are registering online. If you have already completed registration, contact reg@aarweb.org.