



# NCFL Diocesan League Directors

## Spring Meeting 2025

### May 17

This Meeting is Virtual  
(But we'll see you in Chicago soon!)

(This document will be posted to NCFL.org after the conclusion of this meeting)





# Agenda

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- ❖ Welcome - Tom Beck (President)
- ❖ Invocation
- ❖ Tournament Updates - Roland Burdett (Tournament Director)
- ❖ Upcoming National Tournaments
- ❖ Fall Directors Meeting
- ❖ Questions



# NCFL 2025 - Tournament Updates

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- ❖ Competition Sites
- ❖ Tabroom Locations
- ❖ Logistics
- ❖ Health & Safety
- ❖ Situational Awareness
- ❖ Tabroom & LiveDocs
- ❖ Posting Party
- ❖ Mass
- ❖ Service Project
- ❖ League and School Check-In
- ❖ Registration Assistance
- ❖ Before & After Awards
- ❖ ByLaws Updates (& Reminders)
- ❖ ChatGPT et al (Reminder)
- ❖ Observers
- ❖ Judge Training
- ❖ Getting Help
- ❖ Next Steps



# Competition Sites



## ❖ Saturday:

- Policy → Palmer House Hilton - 17 E Monroe Street (may enter from Wabash)
- LD, PF, & Congress → Hilton Chicago - 720 S Michigan Avenue
  - LD will be entirely in the cubicles; PF will be in cubicles and conference rooms
- Speech
  - Extemp → Palmer House - 17 E Monroe Street (may enter from Wabash)
  - OO → Roosevelt University - 430 S Michigan Avenue/425 S Wabash Avenue
  - DUO → Columbia College - 33 E. Ida B. Wells Drive
  - OI → East-West University - 829 S Wabash Avenue (Enter thru Wabash Only)
  - DEC, DP → Jones College Prep - 606 S State Street

## ❖ Sunday:

- Policy, PF & LD Elims → Palmer House
- Speech & Congress Elims → Hilton Chicago



# Tab Room Locations - Saturday

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- ❖ Policy @ Palmer House, Cresthill Room, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ Congress @ Hilton Chicago, PDR #4, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ LD @ Hilton Chicago, Mobley Room, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ PF @ Hilton Chicago, Astoria Room, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ Extemp Prep @ Palmer House, Red Lacquer Room, Report at 7:15am
- ❖ Speech @ Hilton Chicago, Buckingham, Report at 7:30am
- ❖ Equity Advocates, Hilton Chicago, PDR#2, Report at 8:00am
- ❖ Protest, Hilton Chicago, PDR#1, Report at 9:00am



# Tab Room Locations - Sunday

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- ❖ Policy @ Palmer House, Cresthill, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ Congress @ Hilton Chicago, PDR #4, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ LD @ Palmer House, Ashland, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ PF @ Palmer House, Harvard, Report at 6:45am
- ❖ Extemp Prep @ Hilton Chicago, Marquette, Report at 7:15am
- ❖ Speech @ Hilton Chicago, Buckingham, report at 8:00am
- ❖ Equity Advocates, Hilton Chicago, PDR#2, Report at 8:00am
- ❖ Protest, Hilton Chicago, PDR #1, Report at 9:00am
- ❖



# Logistics



## ❖ Buses

- Limited Number staged at Palmer House on Wabash Avenue and staged at Hilton Chicago on 8th Street
  - All venues are walkable from either hotel. We suggest walking along Wabash Avenue in order to avoid the congestion on Michigan Avenue and State Street.
  - Limited looping between hotels only
    - Saturday = 6:15am - 9:15am; 4:00pm - 12:15am
    - Sunday = 6:15am - 10:15pm
  - ADA Buses will be available
    - ADA Bus Saturday = 6:15am - 5:30pm to all sites; 5:30pm - 12:15am between hotels
    - ADA Bus Sunday = 6:15am - 10:15pm
- ❖ Reminder: Please make sure all ADA Requests have been emailed to our Tournament Director
- Roland Burdett - [rburdett@NCFL.org](mailto:rburdett@NCFL.org)



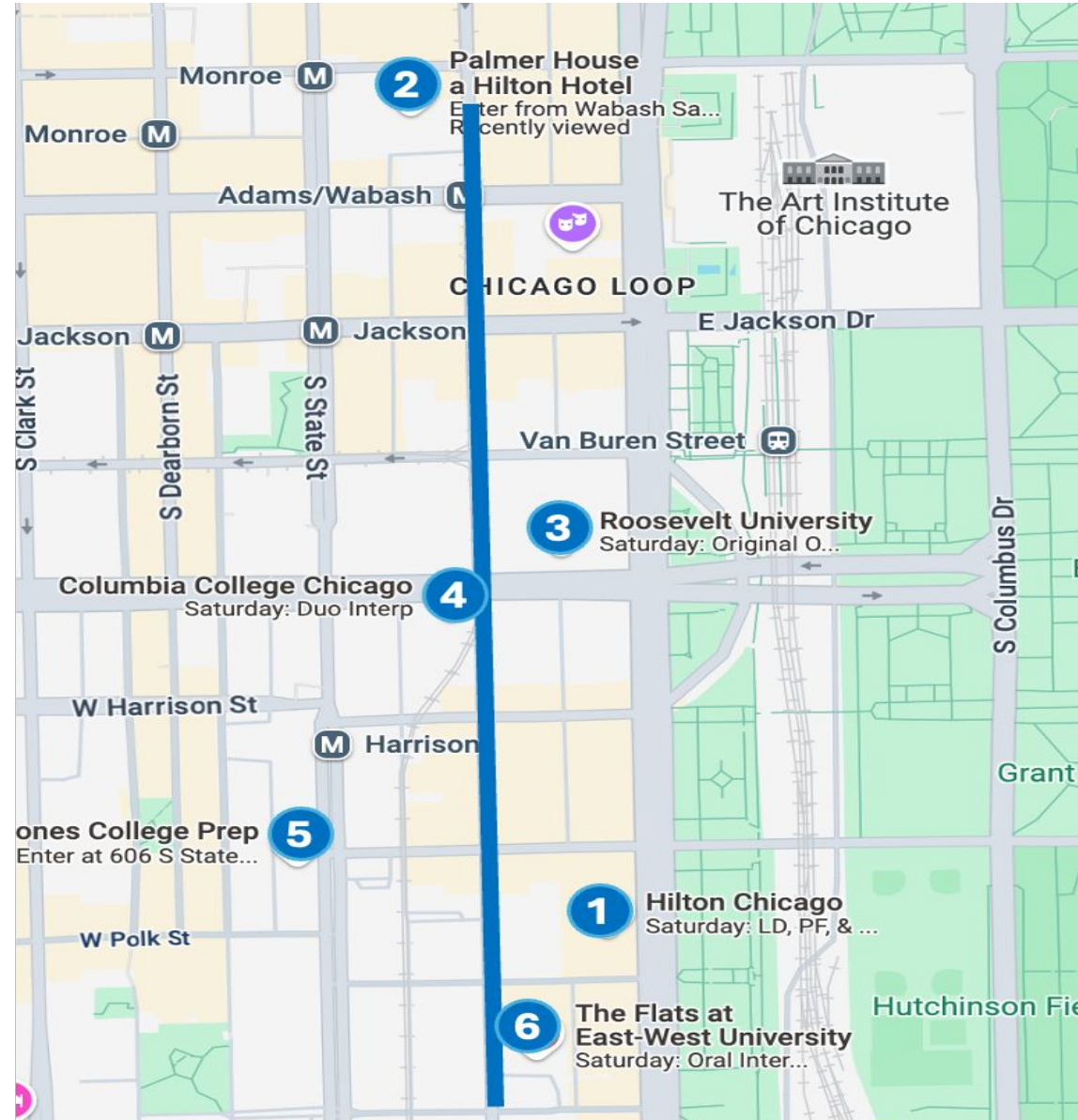
# Logistics



## Map of Sites NCFL 2025

1. Hilton Chicago
2. Palmer House
3. Roosevelt University
4. Columbia College
5. Jones College Prep
6. East West University

**We strongly suggest walking between buildings  
along Wabash Avenue, not on Michigan Avenue.**







# Building Entrance Addresses

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- ❖ Chicago Hilton – 720 S Michigan Avenue
- ❖ – entrances on Balbo, Michigan and 8th St (bus drop-off)
  
- ❖ Palmer House – 17 E Monroe Street
- ❖ – entrances on Monroe or Wabash (bus drop-off)
  
- ❖ Jones College Prep – 606 S State Street
  
- ❖ East-West University – 829 S Wabash Avenue
  
- ❖ Columbia College – 33 E Ida B Wells Drive
  
- ❖ Roosevelt University – 425 S Wabash Avenue



# Logistics

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## ❖ Internet

- Provided at All Sites
- Access instructions will be in the LiveDocs
- Do NOT use to stream video or music
- Reminder: competitors CANNOT connect to or communicate with persons outside the competition/prep room (including: coaches, assistants, teammates, etc.)

## ❖ Power

- While we've tried to set up power drops in the cubicles and there should be wall outlets in the conference rooms, there is no guarantee of power



# Logistics

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## ❖ Hotel Incidental Hold

- The hotels will place a \$100 per night, per group incidental hold at check-in. This hold is fully refundable if no incidental charges (e.g., room service, minibar use) are incurred during the stay.
- At Palmer House: You have the option to disable incidentals for your rooms, which means the \$100 per night hold will not be applied. However, please be aware that the in-room refrigerator amenities will remain locked and inaccessible if you choose this option.
- Please be aware that a credit card should be used for incidentals. If using a debit card, the fee will be deducted from your bank account.



# Logistics

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- ❖ Saturday Lunch Pick up with Tickets (Students & Judges):
  - Roosevelt, Columbia, & Palmer House
    - Pick up at Roosevelt Fainman Lounge, 425 S Wabash Avenue
      - DUO, OO from 11:45 - 1:45
      - Extemp from 12:00 - 1:45
      - Policy from 11:00 - 1:00
  - Jones, East-West Univ., & Hilton Chicago
    - Pick up at Jones Foyer/Main Lobby, 606 S State Street
      - DEC, DP, OI from 11:45 - 1:45
      - LD, PF, & Congress from 11:00 - 1:00
- ❖ All lunches must have been pre-ordered, if you didn't order, you'll need to get lunch outside
- ❖ Hired Judges use the email you receive as your lunch ticket



# Logistics



- ❖ 2023 Fall Director's Meeting: Finance Committee Report
  - Cost of food is high (and increasing each year), especially at hotels
  - Direction provided to Board + Events Planner: be creative with reducing costs
  - We want to provide for volunteers in Tab + for Judges
- ❖ Tab Staff
  - All Tabrooms will have coffee/pastry + afternoon snack (Saturday + Sunday)
  - All Tab Staff will be given \$60 each for lunches and supplemental snacks (covers Saturday + Sunday)
- ❖ Judges = Lunch Saturday ONLY
  - Coffee and pastries at hotels for one day can run well over \$10K
  - Chicago could provide lunches at a more reasonable cost
  - Lunch is a busy time for judges; finding lunch on their own could be time consuming
  - Free lunch tickets were available to order



# Tab Staff & Processes

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- ❖ Please remember that everyone is dealing with stresses in their life outside of our tournament.
  - We need to treat everyone with kindness and grace
  - We need to meet everyone with a sense of service, and to help them as best we can after they've chosen to spend their weekend in Chicago with us.
- ❖ We will have “Front of House” and “Back of House” Teams in all Tab Rooms
- ❖ We are redefining the Speech Tab Processes this year



# Speech Tab Process & Assignments 2025

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- ❖ Judges will stay in the same building all day
  - There will be a Judge Stand-By Room in each building
  - Room #'s for the Stand-By Room will be released via [Tabroom.com](https://tabroom.com) & LiveDocs
- ❖ We will have Tab Staff, Room Checkers, and Events Team folks at each site
- ❖ There won't be Tab Tables by event
  - We'll have 2 people responsible for tracking, checking each event
  - Other assignments include being in the Buildings, Info/Help Desk at the Front Door of Tab, Checking Ballots, etc.
  - Any Tab staff needing help with [Tabroom.com](https://tabroom.com) (knowing where to find things for Saturday), we will be available all day Friday in Hilton Chicago Boulevard ABC



# Health & Safety

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- ❖ Masks Are Optional in Competition Spaces & Throughout the Tournament Weekend
  - May be worn by anyone at any time ... Students, Judges, Coaches, Staff
- ❖ Competitors can choose to wear their mask during their speech
  - Judges will not deduct points or make comments (in room or on ballot)
- ❖ If you are feeling sick or have symptoms, please consider wearing a mask or removing yourself from the tournament
- ❖ Up to date CDC Guidance can be found here:
- ❖ [https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/respiratory-virus-guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/respiratory-virus-guidance.html)





# Situational Awareness

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- ❖ REAL-ID Travel Requirements are now in effect
- ❖ All Chicago Airports are Ports of Entry
- ❖ Our locations are all public property, we do not control any of them
  - Wristbands are a precaution, but not assurance
- ❖ Other activities in Chicago Downtown area include:
  - Suenos Music Festival in Grant Park (all weekend)
  - IML Conference/Competition at Congress Plaza Hotel (all weekend)
  - Memorial Day Parade on State Street (late Saturday morning)
  - AC/DC Concert at Soldier Field (Saturday Evening)



# Tabroom & LiveDocs

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- ❖ Tabroom Blasts will be used to update students and coaches real time for each event
  - Reminder: No text updates
- ❖ In addition, each Event will have LiveDocs
  - Pay attention to Event Specific updates in those
- ❖ Social Media and NCFLNationals.org will be updated as needed
  - #NCFL2025
  - All Social Media Updates through Facebook and Instagram
- ❖ Tabroom Blasts & LiveDocs are the source of official information



# Mass & Postings Party

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- ❖ Mass on Saturday evening
  - Hilton Chicago - International Ballroom
  - 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm (Doors open at 8pm)
  
- ❖ Postings Party is BACK! Follows the Saturday Mass
  - Hilton Chicago - Grand Ballroom
  - 9:30 pm - 12:00 am (Doors open after Mass is completed)
  - Postings expected to be released ~10:30 pm at the Party + Online
    - We do post as soon as we are able after all protests are resolved and all results are triple checked



# Service Project

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## About Elyssa's Mission®

The community-based organization was founded in 2006 in honor of Elyssa, a bright, gifted and outgoing Chicagoland girl who bravely battled post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Elyssa's Mission® provides hands-on support to area public and private schools in order to educate students, staff, parents and guardians on how to recognize and assist those teens most at-risk. We have helped educate over one million students, staff and parents since inception.



<https://elyssasmission.org/make-a-donation-ncfl/>



# League and School Check-In

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## ❖ Two-Tiered OnLine "Start of Tournament" Registration:

### ➤ TIER ONE - Diocesan League Registration (Thursday, May 22 from 10am-6pm):

#### ■ Local League Directors will Email or Zoom into Registration Office

- Confirm everything is set with Registration
- Identify changes/drops

### ➤ TIER TWO - School Online Check-in (Friday, May 23 from 10am-6pm):

- School Coaches will click the "Here" Button on Tabroom.com
- Coaches can email or Zoom into Registration Office with problems or questions
- School Coaches and Judges should pick up Lunch Tickets at this time



# Registration Assistance

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## ❖ Registration Assistance

- Email = [ncfl@tabroom.com](mailto:ncfl@tabroom.com)
- Zoom = Email Invite is coming
- Physical Location = Hilton Chicago 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Boulevard ABC
  - Thursday, 10am to 6pm
  - Friday, 10am to 6pm



# Lunch Tickets, Wristbands, & Merch

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## ❖ Lunch Ticket & Wristband Pick-up

- ALL students, judges, observers, volunteers, + staff need them (Saturday + Sunday)
- Available Thursday (10am - 6pm) - 8th Street Offices, Lobby Level, at Hilton Chicago
- Available Friday (9am - 8pm) - 8th Street Offices, Lobby Level, at Hilton Chicago
- League Directors or Schools can pick up
- If you need extras for observers, stop by the pickup location and ask for the extras

## ❖ Merchandise Sales

- Available Thursday (10am - 6pm) - 8th Street Offices, Lobby Level, at Hilton Chicago
- Available Friday (9am - 8pm) - 8th Street Offices, Lobby Level, at Hilton Chicago
- Continuing throughout the tournament - 8th Street Offices, Lobby Level, at Hilton Chicago



# Anonymized Pairings

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- ❖ Note that the codes you currently see in Tabroom.com are NOT final
  - Do NOT distribute or depend on those
  - They will be finalized by Thursday morning
- ❖ We will distribute the Program Booklet of Names as a PDF via a link from [Tabroom.com](https://www.tabroom.com)
- ❖ We will NOT publish lists publicly
- ❖ We will use CODES for all Competitors, we will not publish Names or Abbreviations
- ❖ We will use CODES for all Judges in pairings, but will provide Names in blasts to competitors in their room ... so you can look up paradigms





# Before & After Awards

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- ❖ Before Awards - SpeakPipe will be available
  - Competitors receiving trophies should record the pronunciation of their names on Sunday afternoon prior to Awards
  - A link will be sent Sunday morning to participants of Elim Rounds
- ❖ Before Awards - Medals
  - Debate Medals for Double-Octo Finalists can be picked up in their event Tab Rooms
  - Congress Medals for Semi-Finalists can be picked up in the Congress Tab Room
  - Speech Medals for Octo Finalists can be picked up in Hilton Chicago, lobby level 8th Street North Office between 12pm and 2pm on Sunday
- ❖ After Awards - There will be NO Diocesan League Packets



# ByLaws Reminders & Updates



- ❖ Read the NCFL ByLaws & Ballots !!
  - [Click here to view the updated By-Laws for NCFL 2025.](#)
- ❖ All Judge Quotas lock as of today ... an entry drop does not reduce judge quota
- ❖ LD & PF:
  - Double-flighted on Saturday
  - Play-In Round Sunday morning
- ❖ Internet Connectivity allowed in Congress & Extemp Prep
- ❖ Smaller Congress Chambers, Breaking to Semis, then Finals:
  - Prelim Chambers will be 16-18 students
  - Top 5 from each clear to Semi-Finals
  - Three Semi-Final Chambers will be 18-20 students
  - Top 8 from each clear to Finals
  - Final Chamber will be 24 students



# ByLaws Reminders & Updates

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## ❖ Policy Elims

- Must have: 4 preliminary wins or at least 10 preliminary ballots to advance to Double octo-final; up to a maximum of 32 teams

## ❖ Extemp - Use of Timers

- “While students may time themselves during their speech, the judges have the final decision on when time expires. If a student is using any handheld device other than a physical stopwatch or timer, such as a phone or tablet, they cannot hold the device, and must put it on a desk or a stand throughout the speech, and cannot touch or access the device during their speech.”

## ❖ Congress

- New Congress Manual, be sure all your League’s entries and judges have read
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15PmypLgQGnmKaFXIKV0Q8mSrMtmJ9hho9dXwve-KwXM/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.u7n052pryyu0>



# AI (ChatGPT et al) (Reminder for 2025)



## NCFL Statement on the Use of ChatGPT and Similar AI Tools

NCFL will not restrict the use of ChatGPT, Bard, CoPilot or other similar AI-based research tools in Extemp Prep, Student Congress, or Debate events. These can be legitimate research tools. However, given that some of these systems lack current data and often do not cite exact sources or evidence, using them directly for speech preparation will be challenging.

These tools are currently being used in schools and workplaces and usage will only increase as new versions and options are released. We need to teach students to use them, as first drafts or idea generators, and how to get to a finished product on their own after using them for a first draft.

While we encourage all coaches, judges, students to carefully review the NCFL Bylaws prior to the National Competition, we do want to specifically remind coaches and students of some pertinent NCFL rules, set forth in the Bylaws, to keep in mind when working with these tools:

- In Extemporaneous Speaking, rule #1 states, "The speech should be an original synthesis by the contestant," and continues, "The speaker is responsible for the ethical use of source information."
- In Original Oratory, rule #3 states, "The speech must be one that has been composed by the student delivering it."
- Students using these tools should cite them as a source and judges will be allowed to consider if a student's sources are well-chosen, pertinent, and sufficient when determining ranks.

As a general reminder, we have no control over whether our host facilities will have blocked access to these tools (and other websites) on their network routers. If your preparation depends on access to these tools, you should plan on using a private hotspot to access the internet.



# Observers (Updated for 2025)



## ❖ On Saturday:

- NO observers in PF, LD, or Extemp (cubicles)
- Observers are allowed in all other events:
  - ONLY with the permission of ALL Competitors & Judges in the Room
  - Anyone can say NO without penalty or prejudice
- If you are competing you CANNOT observe any other rounds in your event

## ❖ On Sunday:

- Observers are allowed, but you may be asked to show your wristband to indicate you are with the tournament
- No permission is required
- If you are still competing you CANNOT observe rounds in your event until you are eliminated

## ❖ Limited Seating on Sunday for all Rounds: Observers must be seated in a chair



# Judge Training

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- ❖ Online Speech Judge Training
  - Sunday, May 18 (7-8pm CDT)
  - Notifications will be sent via Tabroom
- ❖ Ballot Test on Friday for All Judges
  - All events
  - Notifications will be sent via Tabroom
- ❖ Equity & Bias Training for all Judges will be available this week
  - Recommended for all Judges
  - Email will be sent to Coaches and Judges via Tabroom



# Getting Help



- ❖ Chicago Host Volunteers will be in **TEAL shirts**
- ❖ Judges or Students with Missing Judge, Missing Kid, Conflict, or Room Problems can text their Tab Team directly
  - Numbers in LiveDocs
- ❖ No “Dance Cards” distributed
  - Everything is Online





# Differences From 2024



- ❖ Here's the Big Changes from NCFL 2024
  - Lunch Ticket & Wristband Pickup & Merch Sales are in 8th Street Offices at Hilton Chicago
  - PF & LD Rooms are swapped
    - LD is all Cubicles, PF is mix of Cubicles & Rooms
    - Their Tabs are also swapped
  - Extemp Prep on Saturday at the Palmer House is in the Red Lacquer Room, not in the State/Grand Ballroom
  - Mass on Saturday is at Hilton Chicago, International Ballroom, not at the Palmer House
  - Judges on Saturday are kept in the same building all day
    - There will be a Judge Stand-By Room in each building
  - On Sunday, Policy Debate is at the Palmer House this year
  - Anonymized Pairings will be used





# Next Steps



- ❖ Scheduled Activities This Week, **All Times are Central Daylight Time:**
  - May 18 (7pm-8pm) = Speech Judge's Training, Online
  - May 22 (10am-6pm) = Diocesan League Registration, Online
  - May 22 (10am-6pm) = School Lunch Ticket + Wristband Pick-Up, Hilton Chicago, 8th Street Offices
  - May 23 (10am-6pm)= School Online Check-in
  - May 23 (9am-8pm) = School Lunch Ticket + Wristband Pick-Up, Hilton Chicago, 8th Street Offices
  - May 23 (~6pm) = Flip for OI Posted on Speech Live Doc
  - May 23 (~8pm) = LiveDocs Updated with any last minute announcements
  - May 23 (8pm-9pm) = In-Person (optional) Speech Judge Q&A [Hilton at Continental Ballroom A + Palmer House at Wilson Room]
  - May 24 (~7am) = Congress Chambers Released, and all Debate Pairings Released



# Upcoming National Tournaments

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- ❖ 2026 – Washington, DC
- ❖ 2027 – Minneapolis, MN (rescheduled from 2021)
- ❖ 2028 – Lafayette, LA
- ❖ 2029 – Open for bid
- ❖ 2030 – Open for bid



# 2025 Fall Directors Meeting

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## ❖ Fall Meeting

- In-Person preferred, but we will provide a virtual connection also
- Bylaws sets meeting for last weekend of September
  - September 26 - 27, 2025
- Cleveland, OH (thanks Susan Peebles)

## ❖ Finance Committee

- Volunteers Requested
- Email directly: [annybird@gmail.com](mailto:annybird@gmail.com)
- Report Due at Fall 2025 Director's Meeting with any recommendations



# Questions

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## ❖ Questions from the Floor