

# Wed Nov 22 2023 Here's The Latest On USA Fencing Tournament Site Selection

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In a perfect world, every city would have a gigantic convention center that's affordable, available on the dates we need and located in a state with inclusive laws. But until that day comes, we thought we'd share how USA Fencing is approaching site selection for NACs and other tournaments.



(Photo by USA Fencing)

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — In our daydreams, every major U.S. city has a convention center large enough to host a USA Fencing national tournament (that's 250,000 square feet of continuous space or more).

And that convention center is surrounded by hotels that are available and reasonable, and have a variety of price points that work for USA Fencing athletes, families and stakeholders.

And that convention center is located in a state that hasn't voted to infringe on the rights of women or LGBTQIA+ fencers and their loved ones.

And that convention center has openings on the specific weekends that work for USA Fencing national tournaments — a list that quickly dwindles after we take into consideration the FIE (International Fencing Federation) and IWAS (International Wheelchair & Amputee Sport) calendar and other important dates.

And, of course, that convention center offers a reasonable rental rate — and maybe even throws in a few discounts or financial incentives for bringing the fencing community to town.

But we don't live in that perfect world — at least not yet. And so USA Fencing must walk a delicate line when selecting locations for our seven to nine national tournaments each year.

We start with challenges around availability, as only 38 convention centers have the space required to fit a USA Fencing national tournament, which typically uses more than 60 strips.

Last year, [we wrote about our commitment](#) to giving priority to more inclusive states whenever possible. We stand by that commitment today.

We thought it would be helpful to “show our work” — outlining which states are on the preferred list for tournament site selection.

Our source: For this analysis, we're primarily using the [“Equality Maps”](#) created by the Movement Advancement Project, an independent and nonprofit think tank. The site keeps track of the constantly changing landscape of LGBTQIA-related laws and policies.

A note on timing: The list here is accurate as of the publication of this article in late November 2023, but states are constantly adopting new laws and amending existing ones. For the most accurate picture, [check the maps](#).

## Some Exclusions and Caveats

There's no offseason for our Events team. They're constantly meeting with visitors bureau officials and convention center directors to find the best locations for USA Fencing tournaments. These discussions happen all year long and often involve tournament dates one, two or three years in the future — or more.

We share that to remind you that some of our tournament locations have already been booked — and were under contract, or in advanced negotiations, before our new site selection priorities were in place, or before a given state moved down the rating.

Also, our goal is to “give priority” to more inclusive states, and we're committed to that. But as the season comes together and we get a clear picture of our budget for the year, that might mean we end up in some states on the “avoid” list below.

We also recognize that some cities or communities may be more inclusive in a given state than others. But given that state law typically takes precedence, that's what our policy is based around.

# How the Picture Looks Now

Here's the picture as it looks now:

## **“DO NOT ALLOW”**

Negative Tally on [Equality Maps](#)

Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas

## **“AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE”**

Low Tally on [Equality Maps](#)

Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, West Virginia, Wyoming

## **“AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE”**

Lowest rating on [Center for Reproductive Rights Tracker](#)

Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia

## **“PREFERRED”**

Medium or High on Equality Maps, High availability of Women's Health

California, Colorado, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington