



A Special Announcement From Norwescon 44

We are writing to tell you about our plans for Norwescon 44, the steps we are taking to mitigate health risks, and announcing a virtual option to accommodate our members who are unable or reluctant to join us for an in-person convention.

Norwescon 44 will be held in person on our regular dates April 14–17, 2022. We are excited to be back at our regular location the DoubleTree by Hilton SeaTac Airport Hotel after two years away. While many of us rejoice to come together, this was a tough and thoroughly debated decision, and it comes with changes in 2022 to mitigate risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Norwescon 44 is all masked, all vaxxed. All members, staff, professional guests, and performers will be required to present proof of full vaccination at registration and wear a mask at all times while in convention space. We are limiting attendance to 1,000 people on site. Function space will be reconfigured to increase social distancing and air flow. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the hotel, which is taking further steps such as limiting housekeeping in guestrooms to an on-request basis to reduce personal contact. Please visit our [COVID policy page](#) for more information and updates.

To include our members who are unable to attend in-person due to the attendance cap or health restrictions, we are offering a virtual option this year, with up to three rooms of content available for live-stream. More details about our virtual offerings will be announced soon.

Why is Norwescon making the tough decision to hold an in-person convention during a pandemic? While many in our community look forward to an in-person event, the most compelling reason is financial.

Norwescon is fortunate to have had responsible fiscal stewardship which has allowed us to weather the last few years. However, despite avoiding contractual penalties for the cancellation of our in-person events in 2020 and 2021, Norwescon still incurred substantial costs for issuing refunds and to meet ongoing expenses for storage, insurance, website and internet fees, and other obligations which have continued throughout the pandemic. Pivoting to hold a virtual convention in 2021 incurred additional costs. Our reserve funds are substantial but not unlimited, and we have tapped them to mitigate the significant reduction in income.

To be fully transparent, with the lifting of the state mandate against large gatherings in June 2021, unless a new government mandate is imposed, cancelling our hotel contract outright at this juncture would cost Norwescon penalties of more than \$200,000. This would wipe out our operating funds and the vast majority of our reserves. Conversely, our cost for meeting our contractual obligations with the DoubleTree Hotel for function space and banquet costs is approximately \$15,000. The staff of the hotel is working with us to reduce our cost obligations based on our decision to limit the size of the convention, which we greatly appreciate.

Norwescon is, first and foremost, a community. We have heard from many of you that you are looking forward to an in-person event, and in any case, meeting our contractual obligations, albeit with a smaller event, is critical for our financial future. At the same time, our values require us to do everything possible to mitigate health risks for those who attend, and to create a virtual experience to be inclusive as we can of our friends who remain at home.

While this year's convention may be a little different from Norwescons of years past, it will still be, at its heart, the convention you know and love. So please keep a watchful eye on our social media platforms and our website to see what we have planned. We know attending in-person will be a tough call for many, but we hope to see everyone we can in April.

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