

**2018 BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK INAUGURAL VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE  
A DECADE OF DEDICATION: A FUTURE FULL OF BLESSINGS**

## **BEFORE YOU GO GUIDE**

Blessings in a Backpack is so excited to welcome you to our inaugural National Volunteer Conference! To help you prepare, we've put together this quick reference guide so you're ready for a successful event. For complete details, the [conference website](#) is where you'll find everything conference related, including workshop descriptions. We look forward to seeing you!

### When do I have to be there?

Arrive between 4:30-6:00pm on June 24th to pick up your registration packet. The conference kicks off with a cocktail reception at 6:00pm followed by dinner at 6:30pm. The full schedule including workshops and meals is included in this guide.

### Where are we going?

Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza River North, 350 W. Mart Center Dr. Chicago, IL, 60654. (312)-836-5000. Please leave this phone number with your family in the event of an emergency and they cannot reach you via cell.

### Parking

Parking at the hotel is \$35/night with in and out privileges. There is also a special conference parking discount through ParkWhiz! 10% off using code "BLESSINGS" in addition to the discounted ParkWhiz rate - usually between 30% to 50% off drive up rates. Here's an added bonus: this discount will not expire and can be used in your everyday personal lives as well. The ParkWhiz app automates the parking process - using your phone to check in and out of garages, book in advance, compare prices and find you the cheapest parking - whether traveling for work, on vacation or just out for the night.

### How am I getting to/from the airport?

Airport Express (*suggested transportation*) provides round-trip shuttle service from Midway and O'Hare Airports. [Book through this link and save 10%.](#)

Uber/Lyft makes travelling to and from the airport easy by allowing you to [schedule a pick-up](#) up to 30 days prior to the ride.

Chicago Transit Authority serves both airports, offering rail and bus service. The 24-hour CTA Blue Line connects directly to O'Hare, and the CTA Orange Line connects directly to Midway. [Click here](#) for full fare information and maps.

### What should I wear?

The dress code for the conference is business casual. Work appropriate jeans are permitted. Meeting room temperatures will vary, so bring a lightweight jacket to ensure your personal comfort. We also recommend comfortable shoes. Please wear the conference shirt you receive when checking in at Monday night's birthday celebration dinner!

### Meals

BIB will make sure your meals are covered during the conference, to include:

Sunday Night: Dinner and Cocktail Hour with 1 drink ticket included and cash bar

Monday: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Tuesday: Breakfast

There will be no snack/coffee/beverages provided outside these meals. If you need extra caffeine or a snack in between meals, please consider bringing these items with you. There is also a coffee/snack shop at the hotel (Merchant's Market) and you are welcome to purchase items for yourself. There will be a cocktail hour with 1 drink ticket included before the welcome dinner on Sunday evening. Should you want additional drinks, you are welcome to purchase your own at the cash bar.

### What should I bring?

The following items may be helpful to bring to the conference:

- **BIB Business Cards** - [template found on PC Toolkit](#)
- Notebook & Pen
- Portable charger for electronics
- Lightweight jacket (Volunteers are strongly encouraged to check weather prior to travel as Chicago weather varies).

### Why bring BIB business cards?

Whenever there is a "break" on the agenda, that is a perfect time to network with other conference attendees and put those business cards to use! We recommend bringing around 25 cards. Don't be afraid to ask others for their card too.

### What should I leave at home?

Please use your best judgement when packing and just bring the essentials. Valuables, such as jewelry and electronics, should be left at home. BIB is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### Is there Wi-Fi?

Complimentary Wi-Fi is available in guest rooms and the main meeting areas.

### Will I receive an attendee information package before the conference?

Volunteers will receive a conference packet upon registration check-in.

**Is there an attendee list?**

An attendee list will be provided in your registration packet upon check-in for networking and follow-up with peers.

**HOTEL INFORMATION**

**Checking In**

Check-in is at 3pm June 24th. If you arrive early, the hotel can hold your bags at the bell desk until your room is available.

**Checking Out**

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, Check-out is at 11am. You are welcome to bring your bags down at breakfast time and give them to the bell desk.

**Where can I work out?**

There is a full gym and heated indoor pool on the property.

**What other amenities does the hotel provide?**

For a full list of amenities, please click [here](#).

**CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE**

**Sunday, June 24, 2018**

3:00 pm                      Hotel Check-In Opens

**Sunday, June 24**

4:30 pm - 6:00 pm              Conference Registration Open

6:00 pm - 6:30 pm              Cocktail Reception

6:30 pm - 7:45 pm              Welcome Dinner and opening remarks

**Monday, June 25**

7:00 am - 8:00 am              Conference Registration Open

8:00 am - 9:00 am              Breakfast

Opening Keynote - Donna Thompson, CEO, Access  
Community Health Network

10 am - Noon and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm    Exhibitor Booths Open

9:15 am - 10:30 am              Breakout Session #1  
Blessings Branding Bonanza

10:45 am – 11:45 am	<b>Breakout Sessions #2</b> Corporate Connections Panel Grant Writing Basics
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch featuring Table Discussions
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	<b>Breakout Sessions #3</b> Community Partner Panel Food for Thought...and Hungry Bellies! Foundations of Individual Giving: Identifying, Cultivating and Stewarding Your Donors
2:00 pm – 2:15 pm	Networking Break
2:15 pm – 3:15 pm	<b>Breakout Sessions #4</b> Digital Media Food for Thought...and Hungry Bellies! Sustainability & Succession Planning
3:30 pm – 4:15 pm	<b>Breakout Session #5</b> Grants, BIB Style Creating a Signature Event Your Program in the News
4:15 pm – 6:00 pm	Free Time
6:00 pm – 7:45 pm	Dinner
<b><u>Tuesday, June 26</u></b>	
8:00 am – 9:15 am	Networking Breakfast <i>(Bring your business cards for a last chance to meet with your peers.)</i>
9:15 am – 10:30 am	General Session and Closing Remarks
Noon	Hotel Check-Out

## CHICAGO GUIDE

*The following is a brief guide of things to do, see, and eat during your visit to the Windy City. Please feel free to visit the concierge at the hotel for additional recommendations! Click [here](#) for Choose Chicago's official visitor's guide.*

### Where should I eat?

As mentioned above, BIB will cover all of your meals for the duration of the conference. If you are planning on extending your stay, click [here](#) for some local dining options. Chicago is known for deep dish pizza and Chicago-style hot dogs. Try both while you're here! We recommend Giordano's or Lou Malnati's for deep dish, both of which have several locations around the city. Find a Chicago-style hot dog anywhere with a glowing Vienna Beef sign in the window! Try Nuts on Clark and Garret's Popcorn while you're here too, both have many locations around Chicago.

### What is there to do in Chicago?

There is something for everyone here!

- [The Magnificent Mile \(Michigan Avenue\)](#): This street is home to lots of fun shopping and dining! This area is also very touristy. Use common sense when visiting the more touristy areas—make sure to always be aware of your surroundings.
- [Navy Pier](#): This boardwalk is filled with fun restaurants, activities, and holds a large ferris wheel!
- [Museums](#): Chicago is home to many wonderful museums! The Art Institute of Chicago, The Field Museum, and Museum of Science and Industry are just a few of the world-class highlights that are worth a few hours of your time. The Adler Planetarium and Shedd Aquarium are fabulous as well.
- [Millennium Park](#): Home to Cloud Gate, better known as “The Bean”, this has 25 acres of awe-inspiring landscape, architecture, and public art. A great photo opportunity!
- [Willis Tower](#): Formerly known as the “Sears Tower”, this 110 story, 1,450 foot skyscraper in Chicago can't be missed! If heights don't scare you, tours are led to the top of the building Skydeck daily.
- [Lincoln Park Zoo](#): This free zoo is located just north of down town. See lions, tigers, and bears—oh my!
- [Chicago River Walk](#): Located just steps away from the Holiday Inn, this strip has gorgeous views and delicious (but pricey) eats! If time allows, schedule an Architectural Boat Tour, a unique and spectacular way to view the city. Check [Groupon](#) for discounted rates! There are several different boat companies that offer similar tours.

If you have more questions: Please contact Anita Knazze, at [VC2018@blessingsinabackpack.org](mailto:VC2018@blessingsinabackpack.org)