

----- Forwarded message from "Association For Applied Sport Psychology" <info@appliedsportpsych.org> -----

Date: 11/8/2023 at [REDACTED]

Subject: AASP 2026 - Conference Location Change

To: [REDACTED]



2026 Conference Location Change

Dear AASP Members:

It was great to see so many of you during our recently completed 2023 Annual Conference in Orlando – we had nearly 1,200 attendees in person making it the second largest conference in AASP history. Several hundred more have signed up to access recorded content when it is available in a few weeks, and we know that you will not be disappointed.

The purpose of this message is to more broadly share an E-Board decision that was announced during the conference Business Meeting regarding a change in our 2026 conference location – also contracted to be held in Orlando.

In 2020, when COVID forced the cancellation of our in-person Orlando conference that year, to avoid the quite substantial last-minute cancellation penalty, AASP signed a multi-year agreement to hold our conference in Orlando in 2023 and 2026. Following the passage of some controversial legislation in Florida, and along with concerns expressed by the membership, the E-Board wrestled with tough conversations for more than six months about the decision to remain in the Orlando location. Ultimately, leadership made the difficult decision to honor our contractual agreement for Orlando in 2023 and 2026. We simultaneously increased our commitment to serve our professionals, students, and clients who were close in proximity to Orlando, positively engage with individuals and groups in the local community, and expand our conference virtual programming for members who chose not to or could not travel to Orlando.

Over the 12 months following the E-Board's decision to honor our contractual agreement for Orlando, additional legislation in the state of Florida was passed that stood in contrast to our stated organizational values related to ethics, diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice. These events, along with hearing increasing concerns expressed by members, led the E-Board to decide that it was necessary to re-evaluate our 2026 agreement. Using our new [conference site selection criteria](#) as a guide, we carefully examined areas where further Florida legislative restrictions in human rights have been implemented – including women's reproductive health, voting rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, diversity and inclusion, and health care access. The E-Board concluded that the current Florida legislative climate was not supportive in terms of inclusion and safety for AASP's marginalized and/or underrepresented membership and clientele.

As result, the E-Board voted to cancel our 2026 contract with the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista Hotel in Orlando and paid a cancellation penalty of \$166,804, a significantly smaller penalty because of the three-year advance window. AASP was able to cover this amount within its 2023 budget and not access any of our organizational reserve. We negotiated both the 2023 and 2026 contracts in good faith with the hotel and, given our decision to cancel, the hotel was legally entitled to collect that penalty. Some members asked if we could just move our conference to a Hilton property in another state and avoid any cancelation penalty – unfortunately, that's not how hotel contracts work. Even within large hotel chains, each property is its own entity and not interchangeable.

AASP's recent conference in Orlando will conclude our investment in Florida, and we will not return until the legislative climate is more supportive of inclusion and safety of our members and the state becomes more welcoming to all. We expect this decision may bring frustration, neutrality, relief, anger, concern, wonder, and many other emotions. We expect that some will support this decision and some will oppose. AASP leadership believes this is the best decision for the organization to ensure that all members feel safe and welcome in locations where we hold our most important educational event.

Sincerely,

Betsy Shoenfelt, CMPC
AASP President, 2023-2024

Bob Harmison, CMPC
AASP President, 2022-2023

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