



2025 Presidential Inauguration Guidance

Elections have consequences, but not necessarily what you might expect for our regional and local hotels. In early August, *The Washington Post* published an article titled “Kamala Harris fans want to book inauguration hotels. Good luck with that. D.C. hotel rooms for the January weekend are already hard to find.”

Hotels in the D.C. metro area are currently receiving inquiries and bookings related to what could be a historic inauguration in 2025. To help hotels and other accommodations manage the potential for massive cancellations around the inauguration—especially given the uncertainty of the election outcome—here are some policies, procedures, and best practices that can be considered and implemented:

Best Practices for Guest Communications:

1. Flexible Booking and Cancellation Policies

Accommodations should consider offering flexible cancellation policies that allow guests to change or cancel their reservations without heavy penalties. However, ensure there is a clear deadline, set weeks before the inauguration date. This approach builds trust with guests while also protecting hotels from last-minute cancellations.

2. Require Deposits

Implement a policy requiring a small deposit at the time of booking. This can deter casual bookings and ensure that guests are more committed to their reservations.

3. Provide Incentives for Early Bookings

Create special packages or discounts for guests who book early and commit to their stay. These incentives could include perks like free breakfast, parking, or late check-out. Additionally, consider offering curated tours and visits to historically significant museums and attractions that tie into the inauguration and patriotic themes.

Best Practices for Internal Operations:

1. Communication and Transparency

Ensure all booking platforms clearly communicate the terms and conditions regarding cancellations and changes. Transparency helps manage guest expectations. Provide regular updates to keep guests informed about any changes in policies or local conditions as the inauguration date approaches. Additionally, train staff to handle inquiries and concerns related to the inauguration, ensuring they can provide accurate information and reassurance to guests.

2. Monitoring and Feedback

Regularly monitor booking patterns and cancellation rates to identify emerging issues early on. This data can inform adjustments to policies and marketing strategies.

3. Collaborate with Your Local DMO

Share trends and concerns with your local Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). Consider joint marketing efforts to promote packages around the inauguration with multiple partners. Reach out to groups with tailored packages, share information with event planners and local partners, and consider using the 2025 Presidential Inauguration to jumpstart collaboration with your DMO on celebrating America's 250th anniversary.

Please let us know what you are seeing in the market and how we can help.