



## The American GI Forum of California

*Commander: Mario Sanchez*

*1st Vice Commander: Esau Ruiz Herrera*

*2nd Vice Commander: Gerardo Garcia*

### **COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**, by Commander Mario Sanchez

I hope everyone is doing fine and is COVID free. I wish everyone the best of health as we continue to face this dreadful virus. I would like to touch base on the following matters. First and foremost, it has to do with the current AGIF of the US documents--1) the Constitution, 2) Bylaws, and 3) the Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual--that we received and we need to review and become very familiar with them. I emailed these documents to all Chapter Commanders on Monday, June 20. We want to not only follow and align with our own state and local forum's governing documents, but we also want to address concerns and issues that affect our operations, such as inclusion of women, non-veteran ratios, etc. Secondly, please make every effort in staying in compliance with the state of California Franchise Tax Board, and the Federal Internal Revenue Service. Don't get suspended and/or revoked and then have to clear your violations to acquire "good standing" status. Third, continue to meet with your membership, at least through zoom, and keep them informed and active even though we are still under COVID. In closing, I wish everyone a happy and safe 4th of July and the best of health to you and your families.

Sincerely, Commander Mario Sanchez

### **1<sup>st</sup> VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**, by Commander Esau Ruiz Herrera

The American GI Forum of California will hold its 2022 State Conference on **Saturday, July 16, in San José**, beginning at 10am, and ending by 12 noon on Sunday. The San José chapter is stepping up to put on the conference after the original host chapter indicated that it would not be able to host it after all.

The state conference attendees will conduct the business of the AGIF-CA, will hear reports from each chapter, will award a scholarship to a college-bound student, will review the finances of the State organization, and will review the proposed national constitution in order to make recommendations for changes at the National Conference. Moreover, this State Conference will also elect all state officers for 2022-2023. Your attendance and participation will support the continuing vitality of the American GI Forum.

It will also be heartwarming and joyful to see our Forumeer friends from throughout California. This newsletter includes a conference announcement and a registration form. **Please download the form, fill it out, and return with your check as indicated** (or pay and register electronically following the instructions on the form).

We look forward to seeing ALL of you at the 2022 State Conference.

Esau Ruiz Herrera  
Commander, San Jose AGIF  
Vice Commander, AGIF-CA

## WHO ARE THE CHAPTER COMMANDERS IN CALIFORNIA?

Cesar Chavez (Sacramento), Commander Mirtha Villareal-Younger

El Camino Real (Whittier), Commander Ruben Valencia

Oceanside (Oceanside), Commander Ida Acuña

Pfc. Oscar Sanchez (Modesto), Commander Steve Fimbrez

San Jose (San Jose), Commander Esau Ruiz Herrera

Santa Maria (Santa Maria), Commander Willie Galvan

Please note there have been some changes in California. We no longer have a Chapter in Lompoc and we hope and pray for their return to active Chapter status in the near future. Also, please welcome Commander Ida Acuña as Commander of the Oceanside Chapter. I say it's a point of pride to have Two Female Commanders in AGIF CA! Bien hecho California! In our newsletters we will learn more about Commander Mirtha Villareal-Younger and Commander Ida Acuña, both proud military veterans. And, we are proud of them, too. Sí se puede! Adelante, Mujeres!

## Elected Officers for 2021-2022

AGIF CA elections were held at the Annual Conference, Saturday, July 24, 2021

<b>Commander:</b>	Mario Sanchez (San José)	→ mariosanchezmas@sbcglobal.net
<b>1st Vice Cmdr:</b>	Esau Ruiz Herrera (San José)	→ esaulawyer@gmail.com
<b>2nd Vice Cmdr:</b>	Gerardo Garcia (Oceanside)	→ ggarcia9@sandi.net
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Joel Ruiz Herrera (San José)	→ jrhesu@gmail.com
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jerry Alaniz (El Camino Real)	→ jerry.alaniz@verizon.net
<b>Sgt-at-Arms:</b>	Daniel Peralta (San José)	→ duperaltas@yahoo.com
<b>Chaplain:</b>	Eliseo Tenorio (El Camino Real)	→ eliseotenorio@yahoo.com

Remember, that our Elected Officers also serve as our Executive Board. Election of officers for 2022-2023 will take place at the AGIF CA 2022 Annual Conference -- attend and VOTE!

## WHO SITS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR AGIF CA?

Remember, the **Board of Directors of AGIF CA is composed of the Executive Board and all Chapter Commanders**. Presently, there are twelve different members who constitute the Board of AGIF CA, because Commander Herrera is also an Elected Officer. According to our Constitution, Article VIII, Section 5, "One-third (1/3) of the accredited strength of the Board of Directors shall

constitute a quorum for conducting business." Thus, when four or more of the Board are present for a Board meeting, a quorum for conducting business is in place.

## **AGIF CA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022**, by Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

The 2022 Annual Conference for AGIF CA, is scheduled for **Saturday & Sunday, July 16 & 17, 2022**, and will be hosted by the San José Chapter, with Commander Esau Ruiz Herrera and his team. These dates are a small change from the dates previously announced (July 15 & 16). Please mark your calendars with the conference dates - **JULY 16 & 17**. The **Registration Form is included** with this newsletter. Previously, we announced that Oceanside would host the conference, but Oceanside decided they would not be able to host. At a meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup>, the AGIF CA Board voted and approved the San José Chapter as conference host. **SEE THE REGISTRATION FORM!** Thank you to the San José Chapter for stepping in at the last minute to host the conference.

## **PROPOSED AGIF US CONSTITUTION**, by Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

Please be aware that a National Constitution Committee was formed three years ago and charged with reviewing and updating the AGIF US National Constitution. A PROPOSED updated Constitution will be discussed and adopted at the National Conference. Please see the attached letter from the Constitution Committee which explains documents that were reviewed and updated and include: 1) the Constitution, 2) Bylaws, and 3) Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual. A National Conference goal is to discuss and decide, to approve and adopt these updated documents. All Chapter Commanders received these documents from Commander Mario Sanchez via email on June 20<sup>th</sup>. All Chapters are encouraged to review the documents and provide feedback at the AGIF CA Annual Conference. A portion of the AGIF CA Annual Conference will be devoted to discussion of these documents. If you want another copy, I will send you copies directly -- let me know at jrhesu@gmail.com. Aqui estoy para servirle. Adelante AGIF!

## **AGIF US NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022**, by Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

Please see the attached documents regarding the 2022 American GI Forum National Conference.

**1. National Commander's Message**

**2. AGIF 74<sup>th</sup> National Conference: Message from National Commander & National Chairwoman**

**3. Conference Registration Form**

The conference is scheduled for July 25 -27, 2022, in Colorado Springs, CO. You will find all information you need on the national website, <https://agifus.com>, and you can reserve your room at Embassy Suites by Hilton Colorado Springs. Let's help California be in the house at the National Conference. Let's represent! Please let Commander Sanchez know if you plan to attend.

## **THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER!** by Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

Our next newsletter is scheduled for late September/early October. Please be prepared to share your Veteran's Day Plans. Also, contact me and feel free to submit anything for our AGIF CA Newsletter. It belongs to all of us. Our goal is four issues per year -- Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring. Let's use this newsletter to grow and strengthen our cherished organization. Let's bring our Official Prayer to life via our words and actions. "Lord, make me an instrument for American GI Forum growth and strength." **"Lord, make me an Instrument!"** **Sí Se Puede!**

## **STATUS OF THE OCEANSIDE CHAPTER,** by Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

Oceanside is re-grouping and we thank former Commander Gerardo Garcia for his service, but he has decided to step away from the Commander position. We heartily thank **Commander Ida Acuña** for stepping in during the interim as the Oceanside Chapter decides next steps. We thank Commander Gerardo Garcia for his service as Commander and we thank other Board Officers.

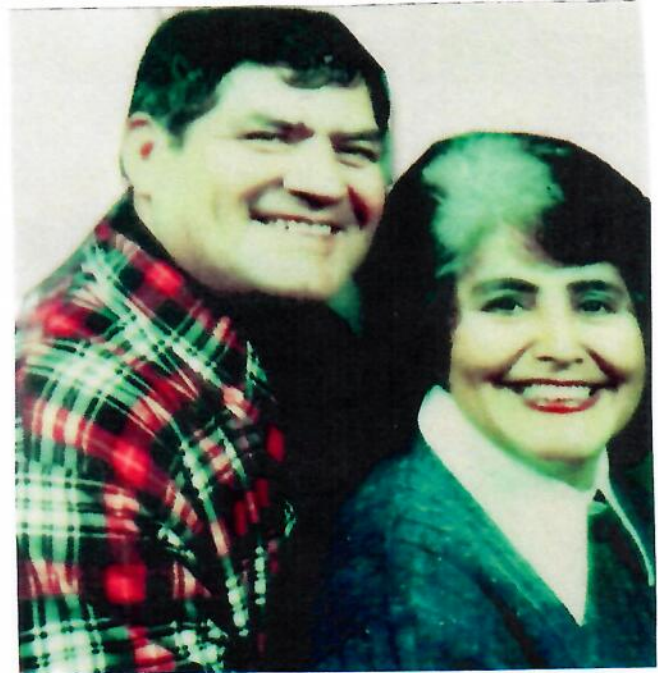
## **MEET COMMANDER IDA ACUNA,** by Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

Let's meet Oceanside Commander Ida Acuña! Ida is a Marine Corps veteran who has a long and rich history of service. After graduating from high school Ida wanted to go to nursing school but didn't get the scholarship she was expecting. And after seeing a Marine recruiter on television, Ida decided to join the Marines. And wow, how many women do you know that joined the Marine Corps in 1955? In August 1955, Ida was sent to Parris Island in South Carolina for her training. And, fortunately for us, Commander Ida was then assigned to El Toro Marine Corps Air Station in Irvine, CA, where she served until her honorable discharge in 1957. Ida was a Corporal (E-3) at discharge and made a name for herself in taking control of and improving the El Toro Women's Marine Club. Ida did such a good job in the Marine Corps Exchange that she was called upon to run the Club and reverse its failing operations. While at El Toro, Ida met her husband Fernando and they married in February 1957, recently celebrating their 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. After discharge, Ida was a working mother as she and Fernando had a family of six children. After the kids were mostly grown, Ida went back to school, attending MiraCosta Community College on the GI Bill, and graduating in 1973. And then Ida went to UC San Diego to earn a Human Resources Certificate which helped launch her career. Ida was attracted to the American GI Forum because of its emphasis on education, and she became a member in 1967. So that means Ida has been an AGIF member for 55 years! Because the AGIF was not accustomed to women veterans, Ida was placed in the Women's Auxiliary, which she questioned because she was a veteran. Eventually, Ida went on to serve in many AGIF positions: Chapter Commander, State Sergeant at Arms, State Vice Commander, State Commander, National Vice Commander, Chair of Ladies Auxiliary (local, state, and national), and more! Ida is presently serving as the Oceanside Chapter Commander. Wow! What a woman of service! What a couple of service!

*"Education is our Freedom and Freedom Should Be Everybody's Business."*

Fernando served 4 years in the Navy, and 16 years in the Marine Corps, and then he retired with the rank of Gunnery Sergeant. When Ida and Fernando married, they were in the Leatherneck Magazine and featured in their dress blues from the ceremony held at the Santa Ana Marine Corps Chapel.

We are proud and pleased to have Commander Ida Acuña on our AGIF team. Ida is pleased to be of service during this time of Oceanside's re-grouping and she cares deeply about the AGIF. Let's all wish Ida and family the best! Like all other Marines, **Commander Ida says "Semper Fi!"**



FERNANDO AND IDA

FERNANDO AND IDA  
MARRIED FEB 9, 1957

TWO FEMALE VETERANS! →  
MODESTO CHAPTER CMDR.  
MIRTHA VILLAREAL-YOUNGER  
MEETS  
OCEANSIDE CHAPTER CMDR.  
IDA ACUÑA



ON  
ZOOM,  
AGIF-  
CA  
BOARD  
MEETING



The  
American GI Forum  
of California



is Proud to Invite You to their

2022 State Conference

*Education is  
Our Freedom*

*A Conference of Veterans & Forumeers from throughout California,  
Plus the People Who Support Them*

*Hosted by the San Jose AGIF*

**July 16 & 17, 2022**

**Saturday, July 16**

**Welcome & Roll Call, 10 am**

Conference Business & Breakout Sessions, 10:30 am

Lunch Break, 12 noon - 12:45 pm

Conference Business & Breakout Sessions, 1 pm

BBQ dinner, Saturday, 6pm

**Sunday, July 17**

Menudo breakfast, 9am

Election of Officers, 10:30am

Announcements & Closing Comments, Sunday, 12 pm

Adjournment, Sunday 1 pm

*"Education is Our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business"  
American GI Forum of the United States*

# AMERICAN GI FORUM CA - 2022 STATE CONFERENCE

July 16-17, Saturday & Sunday

hosted by the San Jose Chapter in San Jose

## Registration Form

### Registration Information

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Office Held \_\_\_\_\_ AGIF Member? Y N

AGIF Chapter or Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Registration no later than JULY 9: \$75.00/member

After July 10: \$100/member

\$100.00 for non-member \$25 for Youth

Cancellation, minus 15% fee, accepted in writing or via email ([jrhesu@gmail.com](mailto:jrhesu@gmail.com)) until July 9. After July 9, registrations are non-refundable but may be assigned to a different member. Refunds to be issued after the conference. *Returned checks incur \$35.00 fee.*

### ***Payment can be made by check, PayPal, or Venmo***

Check payable to: AGIF-CA

PayPal: 408-569-7247

Venmo: @Joel-Herrera-27

### **Mail Completed Registration Information and Check to:**

Dr. Joel Ruiz Herrera

Treasurer, AGIF-CA

3175 Lenark Dr., San Jose, CA 95132

Registration can also be completed without printing the form or mailing anything! 😊

Simply email the above **Registration Information** to Treasurer Herrera at [jrhesu@gmail.com](mailto:jrhesu@gmail.com).

In your email, indicate your method of payment—PayPal or Venmo. Registration is complete after **Registration Information and funds** are received.

Or, email the **Registration Information** and mail your check. Any method is acceptable.

Questions about the Conference can be directed to Commander Esau Ruiz Herrera:

408-926-7163, [EsauLawyer@gmail.com](mailto:EsauLawyer@gmail.com)

Questions about the registration process or payment can be directed to Treasurer Joel Herrera:

408-569-7247, [jrhesu@gmail.com](mailto:jrhesu@gmail.com)

*"Education Is Our Freedom, And Freedom Should Be Everybody's Business!"*



## AMERICAN GI FORUM OF THE UNITED STATES

### Constitution Committee

To: American GI Forum State Officers and Members

Three years ago, a committee was formed and tasked with revising and updating the American GI Forum Constitution. It has evolved to the current Constitution Committee that represents the National organization.

The Constitution had become a lengthy document with many pages that included policies and procedures for handling issues within the AGIF. The committee believed that there were other ways to organize the AGIF governing documents that make them easier to use. The Committee wanted to create documents that Chapters and State Organizations could use such as a Constitution; Bylaws; and Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual in a plain language to address the needs of all levels of the AGIF Organizations.

The Committee made the decision that the best way to revise the Constitution was to break it into three functional documents:

1. Constitution – the main governing document with the basic purposes, organization, background, everything from the first part of the current Constitution, and information from the Federal Charter. This is a document that can be shared with potential corporate sponsors.
2. Bylaws – includes some of the items included in the Constitution and gives more details for the operation of the organization, the qualifications and duties of the officers, requirements for chapters and State organizations, information for conducting conferences and meetings, what a quorum is for meetings, and what is required of the National Organization, State Organizations, and local, regional, and other AGIF Organization(s).
3. Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual – contains policies to assist the AGIF in presenting an appropriate, professional, and “get the business done” conference. This section contains information to help chapters and state organizations to conduct business and keep required records. The procedure for starting a new chapter, and for filing annual renewals are explained. It is full of helpful information for everyone.

Also included in the Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual is an Appendices which contains many forms needed to conduct AGIF business, including a list of the documents it contains. The complete documents for the six policies that were approved at the 2022 Mid-Year Conference are attached. Forms needed for conferences – awards, sample registrations, agenda, and others are included.


A Glossary of words and phrases used with AGIF is attached to both the Bylaws and the Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual. For the convenience of all members, there is a “Table of Contents” for all sections.

The Committee has worked very hard and has put in many hours to produce these documents. We feel these AGIF governing documents will help your chapters function better and provide the information that everyone needs.

The Constitution Committee



# National Commander's Message

 Published: 15 June 2022



## *American G.I. Forum of Colorado*

**Serving Veterans and Families Since 1948**

74<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference

635 W. Corona St, Suite 114, Pueblo, Colorado 81008 | 719-406-6473

*Greeting from the Colorado State Commander Luis A. Vazquez-Contes:*

As the Colorado State Commander and on behalf of the Colorado Executive Board, I am excited that this year the Great State of Colorado is the host state for the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual American G.I. Forum National Conference.

This year's Conference Headquarters is at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, Colorado Springs, Colorado located at 7290 Commerce Center Dr., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919. The three-day conference will begin on Monday, July 25 through Wednesday July 27, 2022. The conference is dedicated to our Founder, Dr. Hector P. Garcia. The agenda is designed to recognize the work that has been bestowed on the organization by an American Hero. His vision, of serving veterans and their families is America's Top Priority. This year's theme will complement the legacy of an Unsung Champion who gave his all so everyone could prosper... **"Honoring a National Hero's Legacy" Justice for My People! and uniting to meet the challenges of the future and honoring all who served.**

As the longest serving and inclusive Hispanic Veterans Organization, we will host a Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Veterans and CEO roundtable face-to-face discussion. The panel will include the Honorable Donald Remy, Chief Deputy Secretary from the DVA, Sergio Dickerson, President and CEO of the American G.I. Forum National Veterans Outreach Program, Jose Ramos, Vice President, Government & Community Relations from the Wounded Warrior Project, and Pete Jeffries, National Engagements Director for AARP, will participate to discuss how we can better serve the service men and women after they leave the military.

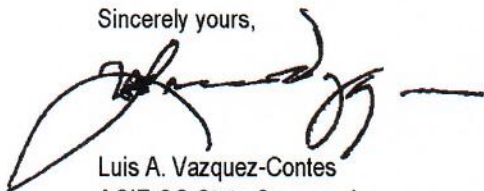
The conference will offer workshops and exhibits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and AARP during the general sessions. We will also host two special luncheons regarding the importance of educating our youth and the partnerships that support education. We will, also, have the traditional Women and Commanders Banquets honoring all who proudly served.

The nation and AGIF-US is indebted to the families and caregivers who have lost their loved ones while serving our country proudly. During the conference, we will pay tribute to Gold and Blue Star Mothers by presenting the families with an outdoor service flag with their name, title and branch of service during their offspring's tour of duty in the Armed Forces. "Your loved one will never be forgotten. Their memories will carry on through the service flag you received for their courage, bravery, and commitment made and bestowed for their service to our country's freedom." To the families, who lost loved ones, we offer you these words, **"Unseen, unheard, but always near, still loved, still missed and forever dear. Gone, yet not forgotten!"**

Our motto is one of Dr. Hector's profound statements: **"EDUCATION IS OUR FREEDOM AND FREEDOM SHOULD BE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS!"** As the AGIF-US, we will continue our mission of educating tomorrow's leaders. As organization, we strive with the AGIF-US chapters across the country to build strong workforces for the next generation of leaders. The AGIF-US has an excellent education program for youth attending our conferences. The National Chairwoman is hosting an essay contest that will award technology equipment to the essay winners. Participants will submit, during the conference, a handwritten essay based on the theme "What is the AGIF-US?"

We greatly appreciate your full support and ask you to join our campaign of serving veterans, their families and our next generation of leaders who will be changing the world. Let's work together to continue a legacy that offers the American Dream. Feel free to contact me at [agifstcmdrluis@aol.com](mailto:agifstcmdrluis@aol.com). It is an honor to work with you.

Sincerely yours,



Luis A. Vazquez-Contes  
AGIF-CO State Commander

*"Education is our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business!"*

# AGIF 74th National Conference

 Published: 15 June 2022



## A message from the National Commander and National Chairwoman

**"Honoring a National Hero's Legacy" Justice for My People!**

**Uniting to meet the challenges of the future and honoring all who served.**

### ***Bienvenidos Forumeers, Friends and Guests:***



On Behalf of the American G.I. Forum of the United States (AGIF-US), it is our pleasure to welcome everyone to the 74<sup>th</sup> AGIF-US National Conference. The intent of the conference is to open doors for all veterans of all wars; *"To make sure the women and men who are willing to lay down their lives for us get the very best from us in return."*

We live in a society that is changing at a rapid pace. As a veteran and family organization, we must continue to be the voice for our fellow service men and women. Our veterans protect are rights and freedoms, but they also provide service and aid to those in need. The caring and selfless spirit of our past veterans continue to live in the hearts of those currently serving in our Armed Forces.

As Forumeers, we gather to strengthen our organization through the many talented and professional people and members of the AGIF-US. The AGIF-US, the Department of Veterans Affairs from Washington DC along with corporate leaders will host a face-to-face round table discussion to deliberate the challenges veterans are facing after they leave the military.



Following in the footsteps of our founder's legacy, we salute our men and women in uniform. The AGIF-US will pay tribute to our Fallen Heroes and those currently in Harm's Way. To our invited Gold and Blue Star Mothers, we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers always. You are an inspiration to the many families of this nation and the world. ***We are forever indebted to your sacrifices and losses.***

Our Future is our Responsibility and we must educate our next generation of leaders. They will be changing our world. As leaders in education, the conference will award technology equipment to students dedicated in making a difference within their communities.

We would like to thank all the members for giving us the opportunity to serve as National Commander and National Chairwoman this year. We have paved the way for the next leaders to continue our mission of serving veterans, their families and tomorrow's leaders.


We extend our utmost gratitude to the AGIF-US National Board for your exceptional dedication and the work you do for the organization. To our speakers and guests, we are grateful for your presence. We look forward to working together and making the memories that last a lifetime.

We hope you enjoyed your stay in Colorado Springs, CO and had an opportunity to visit the beauty the city has to offer. Stay Safe and safe travels back home.

Hasta la próxima vez,



**Luis A. Vazquez-Contes**  
National Commander



**Patricia M. Vazquez-Contes**  
National Chairwoman

**"Education is our Freedom and Freedom Should Be Everybody's Business!"**



# 2022 AMERICAN GI FORUM NATIONAL CONFERENCE Conference Registration Form

Reset Form

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company Name Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Tel. Bus. \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Notice: Proof of Membership will be required at registration desk, i.e., current membership card or chapter transmittal form. Please Print or type the requested information as it will appear in the conference brochure and name badge. Fill in the appropriate section below:**

Forum State \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Delegate   
 Women State \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Delegate   
 Youth State \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ Delegate   
 Corporation/Exhibitor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest

**Deadlines for Registration:** July 10, 2022, for \$225.00. Pre-registration forms will be accepted only through July 20, 2022. After that date, participant must register on-site for \$250.00. Youth members will remain constant at \$225.00. Non-member registration is \$260.00.

**Cancellation/Refund Policy:** Cancellation minus a 15% penalty will be accepted in writing through July 20, 2022. After that date, registrations are non-refundable. Refunds will be issued after the conference. Please make your reservations with the hotel prior to the deadline to receive conference rates. Please let the Hotel know if you require special accommodations.

**Payment can be made by check or money order.** Cash will be accepted on-site. For pre-registration, mail completed registration form along with check payable to 2022 American G.I. Forum National Conference. There will be a \$35.00 handling fee for all returned checks.

Mail Completed Form and Check to:

2022 AGIF National Conference  
635 W. Corona St., Suite 114, Pueblo, CO 81004  
For more information (719) 406-6473, agifstcmdrluis@aol.com or

visit us at: [www.agiftx.org](http://www.agiftx.org) AMERICAN GI FORUM NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
Hotel Information: Embassy Suite by Hilton Colorado Springs , 7290 Commerce Center Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919 Phone: 719-955-6848 | CODE: AGIF

**“Education is Our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody’s Business!”**