

Affiliated County Meeting/Event Planning “Best Practices” Guide

The Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association is happy to provide assistance to those members responsible for the details for the various meetings and events at a local level. Through our experience and shared learning from other counties, we have identified some helpful tips to aid your planning.

Date/Time

1. It no longer appears that having a standard date and time such as the first Wednesday of a month matters. In fact, varying days of the week, particularly between Tuesdays and Wednesdays, seems to particularly work.
2. While not ideal for everyone, it seems early evening is generally the best time. However, sometimes variations on this can work as well. It may be a good idea to poll your members.
3. Be very specific with your times. Clarity on when registration starts, when the food is served, and when the program is, helps everyone with their expectations.
4. Start on time! Even if not everyone is there – they will learn that you are a group that starts on time! Stick to your schedule. Your members are busy people and value their time. Show them you value their participation and time too!
5. Likewise, drawing out a meeting, when people want to get home is not a good thing. You want attendees to walk away thinking – “wow- that was a well-run meeting!”

Location

1. It also appears that moving around to various locations especially covering various options in your territory helps. Of course, if you find that one perfect location – you can always either stick with it or return to it frequently.
2. Be sure to select a location based on your estimated attendance size. You will know that by keeping some historical data on how many people attend. Make sure someone is doing this and/or sending it to PPA. Some types of meetings do better than others – keep that in mind too.
3. Other things to keep in mind when selecting a location: adequate parking, separate room with doors if you are having a speaker, what if any AV does the facility provide – if needed, and the facilities willingness to work with you.

Food/Menu/Bar

1. Usually the best option is a buffet style offering, allowing your attendees to select from a variety of choice; however, sometimes this is also the most expensive.
2. If you are having a sit-down, plated dinner and the place will allow you a choice of two or three choices, PPA can easily include this selection in the registration and give you specific “tickets with their

names” or a listing of the choices. With the tickets you will want to print off on different colored paper to hand out at registration.

3. Because many places will charge you to have a bar in the meeting room, it may be best to simply recommend utilizing the public bar at the facility. You can easily state this on the meeting invitation by saying a cash bar will be available.

CE and Other Programming

1. Please see specific recommendations and best practices around CE in a separate document.

2. Don’t feel that all meetings have to be CE oriented, it is still possible to find companies who will sponsor a meeting to do a product overview. Many times though these meetings have strict guidelines about who can attend as companies do not wish to pay for non-pharmacists. Be sure to confirm this detail.

3. Another option is to simply have a fun event or a networking event. You can also have discussion forums, panels, or town halls. Sometimes people just like to talk among themselves. Consider inviting a local legislator – as this can help you build a relationship with him/her. Be creative!

Registration and Promotion

1. When filling out the event form, fill out as much information as possible. This helps eliminate back and forth conversation with the Event Planner and PPA. It also helps to make sure that the online registration form can be completed as accurately as possible.

1. PPA will post an online registration form within three (3) business days (pending no unusual circumstances) of receipt of your form and pending internal proof, make the form active immediately.

2. We encourage this be done 30 to 60 days in advance of the scheduled date.

3. PPA will also develop a flyer to visually promote the event upon request. However, unless this is a special circumstance we will not do any US Post office mailings.

4. PPA will send out an email to all your members as soon as the event is open. We will do two other promotional stand alone emails, one of which will be two-days before registration closes.

5. One or two days before the event, PPA will send you a master registration list to use checking people in along with a layout for printing off name badges. Please work with PPA to make sure the layout matches the size of name badges you plan to use.

6. PPA needs your help in promoting these events. Help us spread the word!

We hope this will help you have a successful event!

Please don’t hesitate to contact us at PPA with your questions!