

Conventions & Events Toolbox Project

Please consider the following questions while reviewing the draft. Input is due by 15 June 2017.

Does anything need to be added to the draft?

Does anything in the draft need further clarification?

Does anything need to be removed from the draft?

What is your overall impression of the draft?

Program draft

Historically, the program is the core component of an NA convention or event. Thoughtful development of the program provides the very best opportunity for the NA message of recovery to be shared at workshops and meetings of the event. Speaker selection and topic identification typically are the primary components of this work. Maintaining a strong connection with NA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts, while moving through this will most likely result in a successful outcome. While there is room for creativity, keeping our guiding principles as a touchstone is paramount.

The process for developing the program can include the opportunity to invite ideas from any interested NA members, but typically the work of these trusted servants is done privately, with a high regard for the confidentiality and anonymity of those being considered for service at the workshops or meetings. Discussions can be delicate and require that all committee members exercise fidelity and integrity in completing the assigned tasks. Honoring demographic diversity and the needs and interests of the NA community is an important part of this committee's work. And finally, maintaining a subordinate relationship with the hosting or oversight committee is critical to an ongoing, effective working relationship and will support the goal, to carry the NA message of recovery.

Below are some ideas, approaches, and best practices compiled from NA committees across the fellowship. All will have value to some committees, but none should be considered a mandate. Copy, adapt, or build upon any of them as you see fit. We encourage committees to take what they need and leave the rest.

OVERALL

1. Identify how program supports other aspects of convention, how it impacts negotiations; attendance projections to develop a real budget, based on past conventions attendance records
2. Identify common mistakes
 - a. Got any?

COMMITTEE/WORKGROUP

1. Make-up
 - a. Chair and Vice-chair
 - i. Previous convention program experience
 - ii. Good time management skills

- b. Committee members
 - iii. Clean time requirement and/or previous convention committee experience
 - iv. Other selection criteria?
 - b. For regional conventions, each area sends a rep to the program committee
 - c. Membership criteria/committee principles
 - i. Foster diversity in program committee (age, race, sexual identity, clean time, geography) Invite young people in planning and choosing topics, they are future leaders
 - i. Evaluate committee members: How diversely do they live/think
 - b. Due to the delicate nature of the work, this committee is a closed committee requiring committee members to maintain the privacy and anonymity of potential speakers and other committee members
2. Functions
- a. Identify all workshop topics/titles (typically for final approval by convention committee)
 - b. Identify all workshop and main meeting speakers (typically for convention committee approval)
 - c. Prepare the written workshop and meeting program information for printing
 - d. Communicate with recording services to ensure all recordings are scheduled
 - e. Communicate any signage needs
 - f. Arrange for ASL translator and/or other support for those with additional needs
 - g. Forecast attendance numbers (based on past conventions) and compare to the actual capacities of the available meeting rooms so as to appropriately use the space and “right size” the assignments
 - h. Coordinate with appropriate trusted servant or hotel staff to ensure any access or crowd flow management issues are addressed
 - i. Coordinate with appropriate trusted servant or hotel staff to ensure all meeting rooms are set appropriately for meetings and workshops
 - j. Maintain a program check-in station at the convention to confirm speakers and leaders are available for their assigned responsibility
 - k. Provide materials for each convention workshop and meeting, this includes the workshop or meeting format and script (if needed)
 - l. Monitor and record workshop and meeting attendance for planning future conventions
 - m. Maintain a list of speakers from previous conventions, as a reference resource
 - n. Share ideas with organizers of other conventions across the fellowship

SCHEDULING

1. Schedule service workshops so that attendance is balanced and less popular topics are not overlooked; Don't schedule service topics at the same time as recovery topics (e.g., 12 Concepts and Relationships at same time)
2. Schedule meetings and workshops considering the volume of attendees
3. Consider other activities like entertainment when scheduling workshops or meetings
4. Use alternative formats for workshops scheduled at low attendance hours (e.g. open podium format)

5. Work with other committees (e.g. H&I, PR) and trusted servants (e.g. RCM, RD) to identify opportunities for service workshops

SPEAKERS

1. Establish speaker selection criteria
 - a. Establish clean time requirements for main meetings speakers and workshop speakers
 - b. Interview potential speakers via video conference
 - c. Choose topic-appropriate speakers by considering things like age, gender, clean time, service, experience (e.g. use members who take people through the steps to choose speakers for step workshops)
 - d. Ask qualifying questions to ensure speaker has knowledge on topic
 - e. Choose speakers who share about recovery for the majority of their share
 - f. Clarify expectations (e.g. we ask that you use NA language, no religious references)
 - g. Ensure that speakers have a working knowledge of the 12 Steps
 - h. Select all speakers by consensus
2. Request MP3s or CDs no older than three years
3. Select speakers from surrounding states, areas, regions to increase both attendance and registration numbers
4. Ask members of the ASC/RSC to score recordings to gain a perspective of ASC's/RSC's speaker expectations
5. Canvas for speakers in person or as a group; attend speaker events/speaker meetings in groups of five or more
6. Create policy limiting reuse of same speakers over consecutive conventions
7. Avoid circuit speakers
8. Speakers cannot be members of the convention committee
9. Seek diversity in each workshop and across entire program, with regard to gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and clean time, sponsorship family
10. Select workshop speakers from list of pre-registrants to ensure their attendance
11. Once selected, contact speakers, and send a reminder as the convention approaches

MAIN SPEAKERS

1. Explain any travel reimbursement criteria and policy
2. Identify any special needs for main speakers

FORMAT, TOPICS

1. Offer workshops with different length in sharing, e.g. 30 minute speaker meetings and 5-10 minute share workshops
2. Use interactive and participatory workshops, e.g. small groups, open podium, exercise, yoga
3. Identify topics relevant to the theme of the event, guided by the Steps and Traditions
4. In order to carry a message of recovery, all topics should come from NA literature
5. Program is reflective of and relevant to the demographics of the area/region
6. Develop more modern topics (e.g. social media and loss of anonymity)
7. Develop literature driven topics and avoid shock value topics. *Do you have any examples?*
8. Solutions-based topics

9. Be creative, be unique, use puns or plays on words for meeting topics to try to inspire interest.
Do you have any examples?
10. Develop a process for vetting topic; Involve lots of groups in the evaluation process.
11. Get chair people for marathon meeting
12. Use online survey to identify any specific needs or interests of the NA community
13. Consider underrepresented communities or populations not currently attending our meetings when identifying workshop topics and formats
14. Consider opportunities or interest in any common needs meeting

TEMPLATES

1. Program grid
2. Program timeline
3. Speaker selection worksheet
4. Program budget
5. Formats
 - a. Main meeting
 - b. Speaker workshops
 - c. Interactive workshops
 - d. Marathon meetings
 - e. Open podium meetings