

IAFN Chapter Resource, Planning a Conference or Event

This resource developed in 2020 is intended as a resource for chapter officers planning events, conferences, trainings, etc. If you have any questions reach out to membership@iafn.org. There are links to external resources throughout this document. None of them are developed by, or explicitly endorsed by, IAFN but might provide a deeper dive for those looking for additional information and resources on a particular topic.

It might be helpful to talk through each piece of this as a Chapter when planning events. IAFN is here to support you in all aspects of conference and event planning – keep us up to date on your needs.

Select a “Why”!

- Clarify the reason/objectives for your conference. Is this an educational event, retreat, statewide strategic planning, legislative assessment, program planning, or something else?

Will you offer CE?

- Chapters can apply to IAFN to offer CE for their events. [Read how here.](#)
 - Plan ahead as all CE documentation must be submitted to IAFN eight weeks prior to the event.
- Chapters can provide CE for their events through partners, sponsors, etc.
 - How will CEs be credited to participants?
 - To be released in 2020: Video about creating planning tables
- When Chapters provide CE:
 - Ensure that a contract is in place outlining who will complete the paperwork, dates of completion, who will be communicating with presenters etc.
 - Be sure to include an accurate description of the providership on any and all marketing materials.

Selecting dates

- What else is already happening in your area? Avoid competitive events. When do people have or allocate grant funds? For some Chapters it might be helpful to coordinate at this level to promote attendance.
- Venues might offer discounts during off-peak seasons. Off-peak will change based on your location
- Venues might offer discounts if you are willing to shift your date pattern (i.e. arrive on Tuesday instead of Monday)

Registration



- What system will be used to collect and track registration data, fees, and provide receipts/confirmations?
 - Is your chapter doing pre-registration (some options are surveymonkey, google forms, cognito, Eventbrite, etc.)
- How is your chapter collecting registration fees?
 - Mailing checks to IAFN, paypal, other electronic system (monies must be swept from any third-party accounts monthly)

Venues

- Read this article: [An Event Planner's Guide to Venue Planning](#)
- Prior to the conference or event, go, physically check out the space, paying particular attention to details:
 - Is the space/property conducive to meeting your event goals?
 - the flow/accessibility
 - condition of property
 - lighting; how will that affect or impact the training or images on ppt.
 - tech situation, will those seated at the back be able to see the images clearly?
 - Is meeting room Wi-Fi required? Is it included in room rental costs? What is log in and password?
 - Is free parking available for attendees?
 - Is meeting room Wi-Fi available if required for your event?
- Consider different [floor plans](#) to facilitate the type of meeting space you want to create to facilitate your goals
- Request diagrams with dimensions, seating, appropriate aisles, AV, staging, head table, standing lectern, flip chart, break tables, etc. Hotels might say, "holds 100", but in reality, fits 75 comfortably.
- If you can't go in person, do a video chat and ask if the venue will walk you around the space. Pay attention to details.
 - Request photos of the space you've been assigned

Budget/Financial Planning

Potential expenses:

- Food/beverages (meals/snacks) (Note that taxes, service charge, and gratuities may add 35% or more to the F&B total)
- Accommodations
- Equipment/AV/décor
- Room rental
- Presenters travel
- Volunteer/Attendee travel
- Meeting room Wi-Fi



How to determine break-even attendance or break-even registration fee:

Break even attendance example:

Registration fee = \$500

Variable costs (Food & Beverage) = \$300 per person

Contribution margin = \$500 - \$300 = \$200

Fixed Costs (AV, room rental, speaker, etc.) = \$10,000

Attendance required to break even =

Fixed costs ÷ Contribution Margin = Break even Attendee #

\$10,000 ÷ 200 = 50 (event will break even with 50 attendees)

Break even registration fee example:

Fixed Costs (AV, room rental, speaker, etc.) = \$10,000

Estimated attendance=100

Variable cost per person (F&B) = \$200

Registration fee =

Fixed Costs ÷ Estimated Attendance + Variable costs pp;

(10000 ÷ 100) + 200 = \$300 registration fee

Contracts (venues/presenters)

- IAFN is required to review and sign any contract over \$1,000
- Consult with IAFN - early and often – Pam, our Event Planner is happy to assist.
- For clarity, contract cancellation clauses, cut-off dates, and payment schedules should state the actual dollar amounts and/or the actual dates, not only % of things or lead times.
- Room Blocks – Review carefully
 - Courtesy Block: The hotel may agree to hold a small number of rooms (usually 15 rooms or less) with no financial obligation to organization.
 - Traditional Block: Larger room blocks require the organization to commit to (typically) 80% of total room and tax \$, whether attendees reserve and pay for the rooms or not. For example, 80% of a 20-room block, would commit the group to pay for 16 rooms. If only 12 rooms are reserved and occupied, the group is obligated to pay room and tax for the other four rooms.
 - Event History: Review the number of attendees at similar previous events to determine potential attendance for current year.
- Concessions:

Depending on the venue and demand at the property, you may want to request a few concessions be included in the contract:

 - If Wi-Fi is needed for your event, ask if hotel would include it complimentary in the meeting space
 - Complimentary Wi-Fi in guest rooms
 - A guest room upgrade for a VIP
 - Discounted parking/Discount on AV equipment
 - Discounted or no room rental with a meal



Payments (venues/presenters)

- W-9
- Daily gov. rates
- Daily gov. per diem
- Provide detailed list of all covered expenses

Logos/Marketing

- Use your IAFN Chapter logo on all marketing materials etc. Contact Christina if you need these. Review the IAFN Style Guide to ensure you are compliant with all requirements.
- Submit to IAFN event calendar at this link
<https://www.forensicnurses.org/page/ListanEvent>
- Email membership@forensicnurses.org to post to Open Community (all Chapter events need approval to go to the Open Community)
- Use social media #ForensicNurses #IAFN
 - Set or finalize contracts to the extent possible
 - Send any contracts to IAFN HQ for review
- Chapter members to promote event on social media. Include reg link or how to register.

Back up at conference

- Document your backup plan if a presenter and/or key volunteer(s) doesn't show.
- Document your backup plan if an Officer is unable to attend last minute.

Presenters

- Have speakers sign agreement detailing terms of participation:
 - Day, date, and time of session
 - Name and address of venue
 - Meeting room name
 - List of covered expenses, fees, payment terms
 - Date and time of sound check, for keynotes
 - Have presenters disclose any potential conflicts of interest – this is part of the CE paperwork
- Collect Conflict of Interest forms and Educational Planning Tables related to providing CEs
- Collect ppt or whatever handouts etc. approx. two weeks prior (open them, check that they work, review them for language, punctuation, conflict. Inform presenter(s) of any errors. Don't change slides without their approval.)
- Have them sign the W-9 if they are making over \$600 from your event (\$600 in payment - not reimbursement or not costs covered)
- Send an email 2 weeks prior with date, location, time
- Send an email 1 week prior with date, location, time, and any reminders. Request confirmation response

Vendors/Sponsors

- Some chapters have developed great relationships with vendors or sponsors
- How to solicit: Brainstorm. Who do you know in your location that supports this work? Is there a vendor at the IAFN annual conference that is local or interested in greater connectivity throughout the year? Who do you know in your location that has a related or tangential business? There are some chapters that are located in towns that have survivor lead businesses or cafes. Are there businesses that are not related that would provide a discount to your group for food or an in-kind donation? Sometimes a new or local business is happy to coordinate and support. Even if they can't provide free, maybe they can discount.
- Always, when working with vendors and/or sponsors, this needs to be a win-win relationship, with a contract or clearly defined transaction weather the transaction is financial, in-kind, or other.
- Potential sponsor benefits: recognition on website, conference or promotional materials, signage at the location, an email blast to chapter members, again – brainstorm and don't be afraid to call and ask what would be useful or beneficial to them.
- Reach out to IAFN when you start planning and if you have questions when you are in discussions with vendors, contracts, etc.
- Procuring vendors/sponsors can be a large time investment and may or may not be advantageous to the chapter. Alternatively, this is a great way to get volunteers involved with the chapter and grow additional leadership.

Questions? Contact membership@forensicnurses.org