

WSSMA Conference Guidelines
Approved on August 17, 2013
Updated March 23, 2014

The WSSMA Conference is a 3-day state meeting including education and business sessions. As a state function with its own budget and bank account, the Executive Board has oversight and responsibility to WSSMA members to ensure expectations are met. The Board of Trustees is represented by the State Conference Chair.

If letterhead is used for any conference communications, it needs to be WSSMA letterhead. WSSMA is a 501(C6) non profit. The WSSMA tax ID number is used for W-9 forms, contracts and correspondence as necessary.

3 years prior – Chapters must place their bid at the HOD meeting if they wish to host Conference. This decision must be voted on by the Chapter Board of Officers and members of the Chapters before coming to the HOD meeting to submit the bid.

Current WSSMA President shall appoint the State Conference Chair. The State Chair is not required to be a member of the host chapter. Recommendations for this position can be made to the President at the time of the summer board meeting following the HOD. The President will announce the appointment no later than the fall board meeting following the HOD.

2-3 years prior - Date and Site of the conference are set: solicit bids for area hotels. Facilities will provide a packet containing room rental fees, menus, agreements for guest room registration and room rentals and accommodation packages included in your contract. Take a tour of the facility and select the facility among your members. When looking for a hotel the things to consider are: price of the rooms, amenities offered (i.e. breakfast included in room price, microwave, refrigerator), any discounts available for your booking agreement, price of meal packages (usually this costs less than purchasing bulk amounts of single items), cost of AV equipment, parking and how guaranteed meal counts and/or guest rooms that are booked will reflect in the total contract price. Menus need to be discussed ahead of time along with the contract. Although the facilities will usually not guarantee the prices this far ahead, the prices quoted can be used as a starting point to make sure the costs are covered through the registration fees.

All contracts are to be reviewed and approved by the WSSMA Executive Board. Any program format changes i.e. changing installation banquet to luncheon, length of Conference, changing time of House of Delegates must be approved by the WSSMA Board of Trustees (BOT). (Updated 3/23/14) Some of the specific items to be reviewed are taxes, service charges, set up charges, attrition charges, room and meal guarantees, etc. The recommended payment term is no later than 10 days after the conference is completed. Some facilities may require a percentage to be paid at the close of the conference, with anything that is in dispute and/or the remaining percentage to be paid after the review by the conference chair(s) and comptroller is completed. The contract will

not be considered fully executed until signed by representatives of both the facility and WSSMA. Ideally the President should sign for WSSMA, but if not, it should be another officer.

Save a copy of every contract draft. Things will likely change as you go along, particularly for room set ups and schedules.

- 2 years prior** – Host Chapter chooses a member from its ranks to serve as Host Chapter Chair. A chapter member will also serve as Comptroller. Committee chairs are appointed by the chapter for Registration, Education, Programs/Publications, Vendors, Hospitality, Entertainment, Door Prizes, and Decorations.
- 18 months prior** - **Theme** – Theme Development is decided upon by the chapter, but input from the state is welcome. If committee chairs have not been appointed, this would be the best time!
- 1 year prior** – At the Conference prior to you hosting conference, you are expected to do a “Welcome Presentation” during the Saturday Luncheon. Here you will have “invitations” placed on the table (enough for each attendee) that consist of a hotel information card, community or county area brochures and a “Door Prize” ticket (indicates your chapter name, the dates and location of the convention and theme). Provide table centerpieces that reflect your conference theme.
- You will receive an advancement check, if needed, from the WSSMA for up to \$1,000.00 to help with initial preparation costs. This money remains in an account through US Bank and the checks and endorsement stamp are read as “WSSMA Conference Account.” You will receive the checkbook and endorsement stamp by the Fall BOT meeting. The previous Host Chapter turns over the account books at the Summer Board of Trustees meeting to the Audit Committee. You will receive notebooks, forms and conference materials from previous conferences saved in a computer format of some sort that will assist you in planning and developing the conference.
- After holidays is a good time to consider purchasing discounted decorations that might coincide with your conference theme. This saves money and allows the chapter to develop decorating ideas as the year progresses.
- 9 mth – 1 yr prior** – Solicit vendors, donors, and speakers. Vendors are issued a budget at the beginning of each year and if you delay, they may not have the money to participate. Contact the pharmaceutical reps that frequent your office and local merchants. They may no longer be able to donate items, but may be able to sponsor a speaker. Have vendor quote packets and registration forms available to hand to them when they come by your office. Collect their business cards so you have information to make additional follow-up calls and meetings.

Program – Start blocking out the time allotments for the CEU classes, vendor breaks, lunch breaks, Educators Forum, House of Delegates sessions, Reference Committee meetings, HOD voting, lunch presentations, dinners, Installation banquet, and Presidential receptions. Included should be time allotment for the Pre and Post Conference Board of Trustees meetings.

You will need to work closely with the President and Speaker of the House. (Updated 3-23-14).

Education - Start thinking about what CEU topics you want to present at the conference. Review past conference program booklets to ensure you are not repeating a program that has occurred within the last three years. Not only does this avoid repetition in the programs offered, but provides CEUs for different subjects and categories within a five year period, allowing members to receive needed recertification credits. The standing rules state there shall be offered a minimum of 16 CEUs per state meeting sessions; minimums broken out as 6 CEUs Thursday, 5 CEUs Friday, 5 CEUs Saturday.

Speakers should be approached as early as possible. Many providers schedule events and seminars far in advance, so be early just to make sure you get on their schedule. Start by making an initial phone call or email to see if they are interested in providing a presentation at the conference for our non-profit group, and ask if you may send more information about the event. Give them direction in which topic and focus you want them to discuss. Do not offer honorarium or other payment until financial obligations are met. Consider refunding 1 day registration for our own members that speak.

Once they have agreed to be a presenter, send them a letter of confirmation and a speaker information request sheet. This sheet asks for a CV, audio/visual needs (confirm if they have a lap-top, CD, Disc, overheads or slide projectors), fee requirements, if any, and contact information such as email or phone numbers for the business address.

The hosting chapter should present the theme packets to the chapter Presidents at the Fall BOT meeting or the Leadership retreat to allow chapters to prepare their chapter members for the Friday night “Fun Night”. Also included should be plenty of registration forms for the Chapter presidents to distribute to their chapter members.

6-9 months prior - Confirm meal prices with hotel in writing. This needs to be done to ensure the cost of registration will cover any increases that may have occurred since first setting up the contract.

Count ribbons and badge holders on hand and order more if necessary. These are cheaper in bulk and will be ordered as a line item as part of the printing budget

6 months prior - Arrange for Color Guard to present flags on Friday, at first session of HOD.

3 -6 months prior - All hotel arrangements should be confirmed including table set-ups, chairs, extra electrical outlets if needed and waste baskets.

Solicit Chapters and local merchants for the ads they wish to place in the Conference program.

Obtain Welcome Message for program from WSSMA President and State Conference Chair. Hosting Chapter President may also submit a Welcome Message.

Speakers and vendors should be confirmed.

Vendors should be placing their orders and sending their registration fees at this time.

Contact the WSSMA webmaster to post an announcement about the conference to include the theme, dates, place, cost (if known; can be added when determined).

The registration form, preliminary agenda and informational page (i.e. fun night theme, hotel information) should be ready to post to the web site no later than January 31st.

Request state labels from AAMA the first week of February in case they are needed. (Be sure to let AAMA know you need the labels by February 15th.) We no longer do a mass mailing since the forms are available on the main web page, included online again as part of the Statline, and printed copies are available at the Leadership Retreat or from chapters that choose to print them off the web for their members.

Door prizes collected and decorations should be bought

Audio/video equipment reserved.

Conference Chair should go on-line to the State Governor to request a "Medical Assistant Proclamation." Local mayors may be contacted; check on-line first to see if that is an option for requesting a proclamation before writing a letter.

1 month prior –

Confirm all vendors, sponsors, contributors and advertisers.

Make or order name badges for speakers, sponsors and vendors.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

State Conference Chair acts as the protocol liaison, and works with the State Officers and Host Chapter Chair to ensure that all protocols and event traditions are observed. The State Chair is not required to be a member of the host chapter, but usually is. This individual works with the Conference Comptroller and Host Chapter Chair in finalizing a venue, works on contract details, assists in establishing a budget and supplies a Welcome Message for the conference program.

The State Conference Chair has the overlying responsibility to make sure timelines are being met, finances are being managed, and for submitting a quarterly report to the Board of Trustees as well as to the House of Delegates. Attendance at the audit meeting where the conference books are reviewed is mandatory. This position has more of the experienced "big picture" view, and should be someone that has been actively involved on the conference committee in the past and can mentor others.

Host Chapter Chair is responsible for the delegation and coordination of the various committee chairs' responsibilities and tasks. This individual also communicates with the WSSMA officers for specific needs for luncheons, banquets and educational sessions. Other responsibilities could include room setups, picking menus, and working with the State Conference Chair. This position has more of the

“day-to-day details” view, but still should be someone who has participated on a conference committee before.

WSSMA President gives a short welcome address at the three lunches, presides at the Pre-Conference BOT meeting Thursday evening; introduces the Nominating Chair at Candidates Luncheon, provides a seating chart for the President’s Luncheon as well as handling awards and introduces guests at the HOD Sessions I and II. The President also submits a Welcome Message for conference program.

WSSMA Vice President works closely with the Host Chapter to coordinate the Installation banquet including a seating chart, the President’s breakfast on Sunday morning and the Post-Conference BOT meeting.

Conference Comptroller, along with the State Chair and Host Chapter Chair, establishes a budget, manages the financial transactions of the conference account and the budgetary processes of each committee by tracking all expenditures with receipts and payment vouchers. The Comptroller is responsible for receiving the registration forms and fees and receiving and processing vendor fees. Duties also include registration confirmation and issuing receipts. Attendance at the audit meeting where the conference books are reviewed is mandatory. This position is responsible for supplying a complete financial report to the Board of Trustees as a supplement to the regular conference reports.

Treasurer’s Agent is elected by the BOT and will instruct the comptroller on the process to reconcile the Conference Checking account and ledger. Comptroller will send the original ledger to the agent, who will check the ledger against the bank statements that they receive and will reconcile the account and then mail the original bank statement and the original ledger back to the Comptroller. Comptroller should copy the ledger and keep a copy in the event the original ledger is lost or damaged in the mail.

Checking Account- there are four signers on the conference account; the bank is US bank. The signers are the current WSSMA President, the WSSMA Treasurer, the Host Chapter Chair and the Conference Comptroller. It is suggested that the Comptroller transfer the account and obtain signature cards from a branch of the US bank in the area where the conference will be held. It is important to bring a copy of the minutes of the Post Conference BOT meeting, designating who is eligible to sign on this account, and also who is to be taken off. All checks must have dual signatures in order to be accepted by the bank for processing. The WSSMA Endorsement stamp must be on all checks received before they are deposited. The checkbook ledger, deposit book slips, receipts and vouchers must all be submitted to the Audit committee before being forwarded on to the next chapter.

Registration Chair provides name tags and attendee packets, ribbons for officers, educators, speakers and vendors and processes the registrations upon the start of conference. A spreadsheet has been developed to accurately track attendees, meal counts and various other categories.

Program / Publications Chair develops and produces the conference program. Chair works with Chapter Presidents to promote the conference to clinics and medical facilities. The position also obtains Welcome Messages for the program from WSSMA President, State Conference Chair and Hosting Chapter President.

Education Chair is responsible for the recruitment of speakers and developing topics with other members. (Reference AAMA website for Program Planner’s Guide. Also, many pharmaceutical companies have speaker’s bureaus that you may be able to utilize). Program planning involves CEU approval forms, coordination of speakers and scheduling of audio/video equipment needs of the

presenters and submission of CEUs to AAMA within 30 days. Provide electronic means to obtain presentations. Provide two copies of CEU form; one for WSSMA and one for registrant. Suggest keeping one set of hard copies for 5 years to ensure information is on hand for CEUs.

Educators plan Educators Forum session on Friday afternoon, which includes obtaining meeting room/location, speakers, refreshments and transportation to offsite location if applicable. Educator Representative will notify the Program/Publications Chair of the arrangements so space/room set up can be taken care of with the hotel and it can be included in the conference program.

Vendors Chair solicits donations and vendor participation at the conference. Use of the existing Exhibitor and Sponsorship Form is recommended. Responsibilities include vendor room set-up, vendor confirmation and information packets, ensuring lunches are received by the vendors (one vendor lunch is included in the vendor fee.) and electrical outlets as needed.

Hospitality Chair is responsible for the coordination of the Hospitality suite for registration, receptions and committee meetings as needed, unless another space is offered for free. Hosting chapter members are asked to proceed with discretion if the hospitality room is going to be open to attendees for drinks and snacks. There definitely needs to be oversight. Current consensus is that we should not be spending a lot of money out of our budget to stock snacks. Chair is responsible for organizing volunteer schedule of volunteers, not only for the hospitality room, but for sitting at the exhibit booths, registration table, etc.

Locate and obtain prices for corsages, boutonnieres and other flowers as needed for receptions and have order forms available. Flowers for the head table Saturday night are the financial responsibility of the conference committee. Other flowers will need to be pre-paid by those ordering.

Entertainment Chair is responsible for coordinating and scheduling entertainment during Friday's "Welcome" dinner and Saturday's Installation banquet. The Host Chapter can offer an entertainment event after the Pre-Conference BOT meeting.

Door Prize Committee Chair is responsible for obtaining the door prizes that are donated from chapter members, vendors and local merchants. Although everyone likes to win, it is suggested that the committee limit the quantity of these and concentrate on the quality of the door prizes. Duties include wrapping the prizes and coordinating the drawings during the conference. For the prize awarded to the winner out of registrants from the previous year who have returned "drawing card." Keep the budget for purchasing to about \$ 50.00.

Decorations Committee is responsible for table decorations for Friday and Saturday meals. Members of this committee are responsible for decorating at Friday's lunch, usually with the table decorations they used from the year previously when making the invitation to their area. Friday night can be coordinated with the fun night theme, and often hotels have things on hand that can be used. Remind the chapter hosting the next conference that they are responsible for decorating for Saturday lunch. Consult with the incoming President and Installation Officer to see if there is a special theme or color that should be used for Installation Banquet.

Room Registration – Sleeping room registration is managed by the hotel. The Conference committee will offer one complimentary sleeping room to the current WSSMA President, using conference funds for payment if a free room is not provided as part of the room block, or if there is only one complimentary room that will be used by the conference committee. It has been customary for the president and vice president to room together. The registration of rooms is usually part of the overall

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hotel contract. If you meet a minimum number of rooms booked, the hotel usually will not charge for the meeting rooms and may offer a discounted or complimentary suite. Cut-off for the room reservations is usually at least month before the first day of the conference. If rooms are available after that date, request that the hotel honor the conference rates for additional registrants. **Make sure you have given correct information to the WSSMA members wishing to make room reservations, so there is no confusion about how to correctly register for a room and have the registration count towards the total Conference room count.** Specify on the registration form that the registration reservation should be made in the name of “Washington State Society of Medical Assistants” or “WSSMA” and not reserved under the wrong group name, which can severely affect your room counts. The hotel can provide a list of names for rooms reserved in your block that you can compare to names on your registration form. The Conference Committee is not responsible for paying for or securing sleeping rooms for the visiting representatives attending from other states.

Conference Registration – Registration is managed by the comptroller. Three-day conference registration packages will be provided for the two conference chairs, the current WSSMA President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. These will be paid as a line item in the budget (like AAMA delegate expense). In addition a complimentary three-day package will be offered for two visiting representatives from Oregon and a two-day package will be offered for two visiting representatives from British Columbia. These will be tracked by noting on the registration forms and the accounting books that they are complimentary registrations, so no actual “monies” change hands. Registration forms will need to be completed for all. Make sure that all information is asked that is needed in processing the registration fees and forms including credentials, Chapter, city, state, zip-code, phone/cell phone and email, member/non-member, AAMA member number, Educator and if first time attendee. Include a line about food allergies; not dietary preferences.

Suggestion for registration form: require attendees to attach a copy of their current AAMA membership card to assure we are providing member registration fees appropriately. This will be especially important going forward with the Washington State “Medical Assistant-Certified” Category from the DOH.

Pre and Post Conference BOT Meetings – These events will take place on Thursday evening and Sunday morning respectively. They are coordinated with both the current and incoming WSSMA Presidents regarding time and location. Usually the times are Thursday evening after the education sessions ends and Sunday after the Chapter President’s Breakfast.

House of Delegates – The coordination and room planning for the HOD sessions is the responsibility of the Speaker of the House, who will work closely with the Conference Chair and current WSSMA President. The Speaker is responsible for the table spacing and set up for delegates, the chapter flags, head table, gallery seating, microphones, table for check in and white board for writing. The Speaker is responsible for communicating with the Vice Speaker, credentialing, pages, tellers, parliamentarian and Nominating Committee chair. The host chapter is to secure the color guard for presentation of the flags at the Friday HOD opening.

A delegates briefing session will precede the first session of the House. This is where the rules would be read, questions answered, information given. Members can bring breakfast to the briefing session, but it will not be a breakfast put on for the delegates as in the past. The reference committee meetings follow the HOD session I, voting in separate session (Friday evening usually 5 – 6), HOD session II next day. Recommend membership cards for admittance; only proxy cards would be needed in addition to membership cards. Could have membership cards on file if copy sent in with registration forms.

Friday's Candidate's Luncheon – Coordinated with the current WSSMA President, this luncheon gives the opportunity for the candidates to be introduced to the membership. This luncheon usually has a key-note speaker, but the key-note speaker can occur on Saturday if planned that way.

Saturday's President's Luncheon – This luncheon provides an opportunity for the current WSSMA President to honor the past members and officers of the BOT and committees. The president pays for "gifts" out of the President's budget. Also given recognition at this time is the Nancy Fortin Scholarship winners (whose lunches are paid for by the Nancy Fortin Scholarship Committee), the newly certified and recertified CMAs (who are given a token gift from the Cert/Recert Committee), the Professional Achievement Award/MA of the Year Award winners. The Chapter hosting for the next year's conference will present at this time their "Invitation Skit" and are given this opportunity to present their theme to the members. The new hosting chapter is to provide table centerpieces that depict their theme and place conference invitations on the table for each attendee.

Friday Welcome Dinner – This is the "Fun" night and involves all the chapters participating in the entertainment that is fun and can be a "competition" for prizes. Dinner can be served buffet style, which usually costs less.

President's Receptions – There is a reception on Friday night after dinner for the outgoing WSSMA President. This reception is hosted by and is the responsibility of the outgoing president's local chapter. An invitation from the outgoing President's chapter is placed on the tables before the dinner inviting the conference attendees to attend the reception.

There is a reception Saturday night after dinner for the incoming President. This reception is hosted by and is the responsibility of the incoming president's local chapter. An invitation from the incoming President's chapter is placed on the tables before the dinners inviting the attendees to attend the reception. The receptions are usually in the Hospitality suite, if there is one available, or a room that is of adequate size.

Saturday Installation Banquet – This event is the official ceremony for the new president. This is coordinated by the Installing Officer and the Dinner Emcee, who are chosen by the incoming president. The decorations are to be coordinated with the president's chapter and the decorations chair. The incoming president will have a "theme" that usually reflects their acceptance speech.

The Installation Banquet is scheduled to include a "plated" formal dinner. The incoming President may request to have a "parade" of Chapter Presidents who file into the dining area and then sit at the table of their choice and then members of the head table file in to the front. This signifies the start of the banquet. Seating at the head table is the decision of the incoming President. There are reserved tables for the Incoming President's family and guests, a reserved table for the retiring president guests and various other guests. Entertainment is scheduled and occurs before the installation ceremony begins.

EVENTS TO REMEMBER:

Thursday:

Registration

Education session

Lunch

Pre Conference BOT Meeting

Friday:

Registration

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House of Delegates Briefing
 Education Session
 HOD Session One
 Reference Committee Meetings
 Lunch – Meet the Candidates
 Educator’s Forum
 Voting Session
 Friday Dinner & Fun Night
 Retiring President Reception

Saturday:

Registration
 HOD Session Two
 Education Sessions
 Lunch – President’s Lunch and Award’s Ceremony
 Installation Ceremony Rehearsal
 Installation Ceremony
 Incoming President Reception

Sunday:

Past State President’s Breakfast may be scheduled in the hotel restaurant and is paid for by Past Presidents.

Chapter President’s Breakfast: food and room is provided by conference funds.

Post Conference BOT Meeting

Notes/Suggestions:

Walk-ins present a problem because of the enormous last minute time drain and concern about seating, meals, etc. It was suggested to have an early registration (our normal price) up to a certain date, then a regular registration price (which would already include a late fee; same difference, but different perception), and a much higher (by \$100) “limited on-site registration.” These are just things to think about and are included mainly to talk to other chapters about how walk-ins have impacted the conferences they were involved with.

Registrations should be considered private as well as payment information. These should not be passed around, including copies of checks. Info should be passed around through thumb drives or other such backups; only on need-to-know basis.

Need guideline for review of hotel bill prior to paying; list of what to look for with regard to meal counts, a.v. equipment vs what is in contract to ensure we are not charged for something the hotel agreed to provide for free.

Post conference, before passing the materials on to the next hosting chapter, make a one page hints and tips list of things that worked or didn’t work for your conference.

If something is missing or forgotten, hopefully this document will continue to be a work in progress and the coming host chapters will contribute important and vital information too.

