 **Attachment I-4**

**TO: APA California Chapter Board Retreat**

**FROM: Betsy McCullough, AICP, Vice President of Professional Development**

**Kurt Christiansen, AICP, Vice President of Conferences**

**DATE: January 17/18, 2014**

**SUBJECT: Chapter V [Programs] of the APA California Chapter Conference Manual**

Recommended Action:

Review Chapter V of the Conference Manual which covers many topics that are overseen by the Programs Committee of the 2014 CHC and allow its distribution to the Committee prior to the approval of the entire Manual’s update.

Background:

The APA California Conference Manual is an evolving document. New issues arise periodically relating to the Conference Host Committee’s role as well as to financial and locational considerations. Timely evolution of the handling of the Programs portion of the annual conference is one that is critical to meet the expressed needs of our members.

Chapter V below was drafted in 2010 following the Chapter conference in San Diego and parts of it were incorporated into the Conference Manual. In 2011 further revisions were made but to the pre-2010 Chapter thus negating some of the important content that had been added.

Chapter V has been further updated since 2010 and it is proposed that the Board support the distribution of this material to the 2014 Programs Committee. Several issues are highlighted and will be enhanced prior to our request for formal adoption of Chapter V.

The balance of the Conference Manual is currently being updated but was not ready for this Board retreat. It will be brought to the Board as soon as possible. There may be some issues from the other Manual chapters that are brought to the Board’s attention as part of this item.

Fiscal Impact:

None identified with the approval of this item.

**V. THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM [revisions made 12/31/13 to 2010 draft by Betsy McCullough]**

Even though the bulk of this manual addresses necessary logistics, the sessions and events presented at the conference are the heart of the conference. The program is a chance to highlight regional assets and local efforts. Because the conference is the largest, most complex, annual activity of the chapter, development of the conference sessions and events is a process led by the Conference Host Committee [CHC] with input from, and approval by, the APA California Board [APA California], including the Vice-President of Professional Development and the Vice-President of Conferences.

The discussions below are grouped by topics within the responsibility of the CHC Programs Committee rather than in chronological order. Programs Committees may find it beneficial to initiate certain tasks earlier rather than later based on number or physical location of committee members, or conference site location.

Also, Appendix H of the manual contains sample forms that can be used by Programs Committees in their session development and review. [Note: not included in the January 2014 draft presented to the Board]

1. **CONFERENCE THEMES & TRACKS**

**Conference Theme**

The conference theme and logo distinguishes your conference from others. The conference theme should be reflective of your region and highlight your local activities and assets. After forming the CHC, these are your earliest tasks. While the theme is a CHC proposal, the APA California does reserve the right to require the theme to highlight an issue of importance to the entire chapter. In any case, the selected theme will be subject to APACA approval which may be conducted either at a meeting or by email vote.

It has been typical that the CHC occupies a complimentary booth at the prior year’s conference to promote the next year’s conference. Therefore, selecting a conference theme and logo and preparing ‘giveaways’ for the prior conference is typically completed about a year prior to your conference. It may be more than a year if your conference is late in the fall [such as November] and may be less than a year if early [September].

**Session Tracks**

Identification of conference tracks follows theme and logo development. Tracks, used to identify series of similar-subject sessions, should be reflective of the themes of the conference. Keep the session tracks simple. Remember that the sessions should cover all types of planning as well as be relevant to California’s urban, suburban and rural areas. Typically, no more than 4 or 5 tracks are advised.

When you get an idea of what you want to name your tracks, a handy way to identify their content is to go to the topic areas that are found in the online Conference Session Submission Form [CSSF] and sort those topics into your tracks: this assures that you accommodate all topic areas in which you’ll received session proposals. Timing-wise, it’s helpful to session proposers to know the conference tracks to help them focus their session into one of them.

“Young Planners” is an emerging session identifier. It is not a track, but is an icon that the host section’s Young Planners Group [YPG] can attach to sessions that they believe are important to planners with 0-5 years experience.

1. **CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS & ONLINE SUBMISSION FORMS**

The team of the CHC’s Program Committee Chair, the Vice-President of Professional Development (or Chapter Programs Coordinator) will work with the Chapter’s staff and consultants to develop a Call for Presentations and a general schedule with all the deadlines related to the Call for Presentations [CPF], session solicitation & selection and program sessions set up. Those staff and consultants include: [not listed for Board meeting in January].

**Call for Presentations**

The CFP is a write-up that invites speakers to submit proposals to speak at the chapter conference. The CFP is written by the Programs Committee discussing the conference theme and goals and identifying the tracks which will be the guiding framework when selecting regular program sessions for the number of available time slots.

The CFP should be detailed enough to excite potential session submitters. It can be the equivalent of a printed page or two since it created and distributed electronically – via email and on the chapter website. The Conference Design and Publication Consultant can prepare the CFP graphics if not submitted with the CFP language by the CHC.

The CFP should be developed and reviewed soon after the previous year’s conference. Typically the CFP should be posted about 9 months prior to your conference which means November or December following the prior year’s conference. Regardless of the spacing between your conference and the previous year’s, it’s important to allow some number of weeks for submissions after January 1 of the conference year. The CFP should allow at minimum a month for submitters to propose sessions through the online submission process. The CFP schedule will be set up in the initial discussion with staff and the consultants soon after the prior year’s conference.

The support team has continued to make improvements in the submittal process and includes advisories to submitters based on issues that have come up in prior years. Several key issues that have been or should be addressed early in the submittal process is what will the registration & fee policy be for non-APA speakers; also moderators must be reminded that they will receive a confirmation email that their session was successfully submitted if it was and that they should follow-up with the identified staff if they do not receive that confirmation.

The CFP should indicate the session length being sought to allow submitters to propose a proper number of speakers or materials to be proposed. While in past years there has been flexibility to set the length of regular sessions at 1.25 or 1.5 hours, 1.5 has become the standard length of a session. This length started when Law and Ethics requirements of 1.5 hours had to be accommodated and it was easier to make all session block lengths the same. Additionally, feedback from panels indicated that the 1.5 hour sessions gave adequate time for in-depth presentations plus audience questions.

**Online Session Submissions**

The Conference Session Submission Form [CSSF] became an online requirement in 2010. The CSSF allows uniformly-written proposals to be evaluated for inclusion in the conference program. Several specific limitations included in the form are the session abstract length and speaker biography length as well as requiring identification of topics to be covered in the session and CM credit justification.

The CSSF limits the number of speakers that can be identified to 6 per session. Even in 1.5 hour sessions a maximum of 6 is recommended as the number which allows for effective presentations and time for questions and answers from the attendees.

A major reason for standardizing the form content is to allow it to be used to submit to APA National for CM credit evaluation. The form used starting in 2010 was approved by APA National for use and thus eliminates the need for the CHC Programs Committee or the staff team to have to rewrite session submissions to adjust content focus or length.

1. **REVIEW PROCESS FOR SESSION SELECTION**

Selecting regular sessions for the conference is the most significant task taken on by the CHC’s Programs Committee. The review process begins at the end of the period for accepting session submissions through the online form.

**Making Certain an Adequate Number of Proposals are Submitted**

Emails reminding potential submitters of the deadline have been used to remind or prompt timely submittals. Emails should be sent to chapter members following the CFP posting on the chapter website: the 1st email should be sent at the time of the posting to the website announcing the availability of the CFP; the 2nd email should be sent 1 month before the CFP deadline; and the 3rd email 1 week before that deadline. These are sent out after discussion between the staff and Programs Chair depending on the number of proposals received. Staff will send out these emails.

If the Programs Committee does not believe an adequate number of session proposals has been received, the deadline may be extended by a couple of weeks. The initial schedule that was developed may have had flexibility built in or can be reviewed to find the flexibility to allow the extension. The support team knows how many submissions have been made by the initial deadline and can actually provide the Programs Chair with a progress report a few weeks before the deadline. How many is ‘enough’? It’s a judgment call, but you will be more comfortable if you can review and consider at least twice as many proposals as you have session slots for [number of regular session blocks x number of rooms]. Note: a significant portion of submittals come in the last week before the deadline. Don’t panic and keep in touch with staff.

Also remember that you are not waiting for sessions that fill your total number of regular session slots. There are approximately 20 session that are ‘guaranteed’ or ‘mandated’. See Mandated Sessions below. Additionally, your committee may have worked to secure a substantial number of Law and Ethics sessions [10 or more] to meet the continuing interest from attendees in gaining Law and Ethics CM credits at the annual conference. Then you may have been urging submittal of local sessions [20% of the total number of regular sessions]. So, you may only be depending on one-half of the number of session slots to be filled by sessions your Programs Committee is not proactively working to fill.

**Conference Session Selection Participants**

Once it’s been determined that an adequate number of regular session proposals have been received, the Programs Committee chair should set a schedule for the Committee to review all proposals. Generally, the Programs Committee should allow a minimum of 2 months to sort through and read the submissions and review, rate, and rank them, followed by assigning them to session slots and rooms]

The selection of conference sessions is a coordinated effort between the Programs Committee and the Chapter. However, given the volume of information being evaluated for quality content and fit with the program theme, there are several reasons why the Chapter defers to the Programs Committee in selecting sessions. First, the volume of information being sorted, reviewed and evaluated is massive; face-to-face meetings of the Programs Committee is probably the best way to make sure that all proposals received are reviewed and fairly discussed. Also, it is the Programs Committee members who are the most familiar with the conference themes and tracks and who know how session proposals provide a balanced and enticing program. The Chapter’s selection representatives – particularly the Vice President of Conferences and the Vice President of Professional Development - will review the selections and proposals of the local Program Committee. These Chapter representatives will be evaluating whether a balanced statewide program is being proposed by the CHC committee in terms of urban-rural; north-south; and topics of statewide significance. They may make changes to the list of sessions selected by the local Programs Committee.

When selecting sessions, the Programs Committee should count the number of available regular session slots to make sure that the number of sessions selected plus all previously committed-to sessions fit into the number of session block slots available.

**Conference Session Selection Process**

Proposed sessions are collected online and forwarded to the Chapter’s administrative support team. The conference assistants will create a numbered matrix of submissions’ titles and moderators for use by the Programs Committee and Chapter that are keyed to the individual online submittals.

Two key factors in selecting regular [i.e., non-keynote, non-student] sessions are: having a clear understanding about filling your session tracks, and how many sessions you will be able to select from those proposed.

NOTE: The following discussion is intended to guide the Programs Committee in approaching the daunting task of reviewing and selecting sessions for your conference. It’s meant as a way to think about your committee’s duties and not meant as a dictate. [Forms are provided in Appendix H to help Programs Committees visualize a review format.]

Balancing Conference Tracks: while you are going to want to select the absolute best proposals for your conference, you will want to generally balance the number selected among your session tracks. Use tools to sort the proposals. You can use the descriptions you used in the Call for Presentations as well as the topics listed on the CFP [that are used for CM credit evaluation] to create review sheets. Create a page for each track, with topics within each track noted. As you begin to review the regular session proposals, first identify the track that each proposal fits within. Review the proposals track by track, noting the topics within each track where you have proposals since you may have 50 or more proposals for each of your tracks, make a note of specific topics which describe similar sessions. For example, within a track that contains the built environment, you may differentiate historic presentation, revitalization, mixed use concepts, urban agriculture, and traffic calming topics. For a track that addresses policy and law, differentiate Climate Action Plans, housing, general plans, CEQA, NEPA, public records & open meetings topics. List the assigned numbers of each proposal under those very specific topics so that you can review them against each other. [See Appendix H.] When you review proposals within the same topic, you’ll want to compare number and quality of speakers, CM creditworthiness of the material, breadth of material proposed among the proposals. Try to not select the same speaker for multiple sessions, especially on similar topics.

How many sessions: before you start selecting, it’s important for you to have a good idea about how many regular sessions you’re going to be able to accommodate. Factors are: how many plenary sessions will you have taking regular session block times; how many session rooms do you know will adequately accommodate concurrent sessions at the conference site and how many session blocks can you fit in each of the conference days. Discuss these factors and calculate the number of regular sessions you are looking for. Strive to avoid using general session breakout rooms [i.e., where meals and keynotes are held] for your regular sessions. Using portions of ballrooms may cause room conversion times that are longer than those that typically used between sessions [15 minutes], causing you to lose valuable session time midday.

Regular sessions are divided into groups - sessions that are mandated by APA California [see below]; local sessions [20% of the total number of regular sessions]; and non-local sessions that fill out and balance your tracks.

Mandated sessions are ones that represent groups within the Chapter that present particular perspectives or opportunities to the broader membership, are topics that the Chapter believes must be present at every conference, or are mandatory for AICP members. They are sometimes dedicated to organizations that are part of APA such as the California Planning Foundation or the California Roundtable. These are sessions that you should be on the lookout for during the review of submittals since some tend to be submitted during the regular process but others may have to be solicited from the typical provider. If the Chapter has a current contract with its periodic but long-time major sponsor, CALTRANS, that agency’s support usually includes a provision that allowed themto select 5 transportation-related sessions to be included in the total number of regular sessions.

Identify the total number of regular sessions you can accommodate in your schedule. Account for approximately 15 slots of the total number of session slots based on the session below. Then note that 10 is a reasonable number of Law CM credit sessions to include in the program. Reserve more if you are soliciting multiple Ethics CM credit sessions. Finally 20% of the total number of sessions can be claimed as “local sessions”. The 20% will equate to a different number depending on your total number of sessions that you are planning based on expected attendance and session room availability. Refer to this table for an approximate breakdown.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Current Allocation of “Mandatory Sessions” | | 2013 Handling | What we might look forward to [Regular Sessions] | |
| Legislative Update/Sande George | 1 | One session for Sande – Law CM [may be part of the 10 solicited Law sessions] | Same | 1 |
| Commission & Boards | 1 | 3 guaranteed as C&B rep wants to attract more C&B | 3 is possible to provide substance to this growing group | 3 |
| AICP Exam Prep | 1 | Produced by AICP Exam Coordinator/VPPD | Same | 1 |
| Planners Emeritus Network | 1 | One regular session | Same | 1 |
| CPF Sessions | 2 | One regular session + one session on Student Day | Same during regular session scheduling | 1 |
| CPR Sessions | 2 | They requested 3 of their sessions this year | They are a source of competent reliable sessions | 2-3 |
| Ethics | 1 | 3 were proposed this year. | We need to have 3 or 4 for selection | 3-4 |
| Section Directors | 1 | Not in the required list but presented in 2013 | Same | 1 |
| Chapter President | 1 | Not in the require list but has been presented in recent years | Same | 1 |
| Law | 1 | We have about 10 submitted this year, including Sande George/David Snow’s; all were approved for CM Law & for MCLE | We should have 10 for sure in a variety of topic areas we pursue to assure an array of topics. Looking at ‘Law Day’ on Monday | 10 |
| CHC – Local Selection | 20% | They did select 20% | Continue with 20% of total # of regular sessions; if there are 9 session blocks with 8 sessions each = 72 regular sessions typical | 15 |

Trends in several areas of session selection are represented in the above matrix and reflect a goal of attracting new conference attendees such as more Commission & Board members and more attorneys. For example, the idea of an enhanced series of law sessions is attractive to many APA members and also allows the conference to try to attract attorneys who are seeking MCLE credit [our Law CM sessions typically qualify for MCLE credit from the Bar Association.] incorporating several guaranteed focused sessions for commission and board members will attract more to the conference. These groups may contain APA members or may entice them to become members of APA because of the professional development offerings available.

Note that student sessions are not identified in this matrix. That is because they do not occupy regular session slots which are devote to as many CM creditworthy offerings as possible.

Local sessions can be 20% of the total number of regular sessions at the conference. The identification of a local session can be either one that the CHC feels strong must be included in the program, features local speakers, or highlights accomplishments within the host section’s area. The CHC may want to make its Section members aware of this opportunity and encourage submittal of sessions through the regular CFP submission process. It is NOT mandated that 20% of the sessions MUST be local sessions; conversely if more than 20% of all sessions proposed are from the host section, it does not mean that local sessions must be rejected because they are local. If they are worthy of consideration otherwise, there is nothing to say they cannot be selected as sessions of statewide significance.

Take the total number of regular sessions, then deduct 15 mandated sessions and the number of Law and Ethics sessions you want to include, then deduct 20% of the total number of regular sessions for local selections; the remaining number is how many sessions the Programs Committee should select to balance the program topics and implement your theme and tracks.

When the CHC Programs Committee has selected sessions, or held session slots for mandated sessions not yet received, a list with the numbered session title and session track should be forwarded to the chapter reviewers for concurrence or modification. This can probably be handled via email, though a meeting or conference call may be easier or convenient. [See Appendix H for a sample listing format of numbered sessions.]

A few recommendations when selecting sessions: while you are looking for the best presentation on a topic, and may be drawn to a known moderator, don’t select the same speakers for more than several panels; be cautious of sessions that sound good but have only the moderator listed; be cautious of multiple sessions with the same person – not the moderator – listed as the contact: it could mean the contact is a PR person for one or more companies proposing multiple sessions and experience has shown that there may need to be a significant amount of assistance by the conference committee or support team to get the session information completed and submitted on time.

While some topics continue to be “hot” year to year, others aren’t. Review your session selections against the prior year’s program to make sure that your sessions are not primarily duplicative of them. Recent comments from conference attendees indicate a desire for more variety in topics presented.

1. **CONFERENCE SESSION NOTIFICATIONS**

Following completion of the Programs Committee selection process, AND concurrence by Chapter representatives, notification must be made to both those not selected as well as to those selected.

The CHC Programs Committee will coordinate with the support team by providing the numbered matrix identifying those submissions both selected and not selected. It may vary year to year whether one email is sent to all submittals indicating with an “X” whether the session was selected or not. A combined notification has been used several times when time was short, but this method of notification was confusing to, and badly-received by, some who did not read the email closely and thought their session had been selected but was not. The preferable method is to send an email to moderators not selected and a separate one to those selected with different messages.

It is suggested that the Programs Committee NOT indicate that a waiting list will be established for those not selected but still interested in presenting their session. Sessions rarely are withdrawn, and if they are, it is done so close to the time of the conference that an alternative panel would not have adequate preparation time. If a session does drop out, the Programs Committee can probably find a local session to substitute. In general, one session dropping out of a session block does not adversely affect the overall quality or variety of sessions in that block.

For those sessions selected, after the notification email, it is a good idea to send another email to moderators to clearly indicate to them that they now become the sole point of contact for the session. Despite the requirements in the Call for Proposals for complete session information, it is inevitable that some speakers will change, or a topic will change slightly from what is proposed. It may even be that the Programs Committee requests a slight adjustment in a topic to provide what they believe is a more suitable discussion.

It’s advisable to keep in regular contact with moderators, updating them as to progress in various areas of conference preparation. Also, it’s advisable to remind them in each email about certain key points: registration policy for speakers; what A/V equipment will be provided in the room; how and when their panel’s presentation is required electronically. The Programs Committee chair and support staff should discuss the need for particular emails to moderators depending on how timely response are given to request for changes or other information. The Programs Chair should work with support staff to prepare the content of the emails, and support staff can email them out. The following emails can be considered:

* following the email regarding their session selection, ask them to confirm that they are still interested in presenting their session;
* after assignment to a particular session block, ask them to confirm that they and their panelists are available at that time and date;
* prior to support staff’s submittal of all eligible sessions to APA National for CM credit, ask moderators to confirm again their title, topic, date and time; [See Section F below on CM credit]

**E. ORGANIZING THE SCHEDULE & SLOTTING OF ALL THE PROGRAMS**

In addition to regular sessions, the conference must accommodate a variety of special events and mandatory sessions and meetings. More frequently, special meetings of APA Divisions, state management, and APA special interest groups are being held at conferences. While it’s important to have an idea of the magnitude of special events at the time of reserving hotel and conference center space, fitting these times with the regular conference sessions to make sure there’s room for all comes together when developing the conference schedule. In general, it is the role of the hired Conference Coordinator to find time slots and meeting rooms for special [i.e., non-session] meetings. Special meetings will not displace regular session block sessions.

**Develop a Schedule Shell**

A schedule shell is a figure or diagram that divides each conference day into time slots, starting with breakfast, showing session block timeslots, breaks, luncheons, and evening events. It will help the Programs Committee and CHC to prepare a visual aid to see how regular sessions, required sessions, luncheons, special events, and special meetings will all fit into the conference time slots. Since any schedule will be converted into the format of a ‘Conference at a Glance’, it is easy to start with a schedule blank that is in Glance format. The staff or graphic design consultant will provide the CHC with a typical shell to start. You can get a sense of organization by looking at the one from the prior year’s conference. That does not mean that the timeframes for sessions must be those times, nor does it dictate time or number of keynote sessions. It is simply a format that Board members, the Conference Coordinator and graphics and other support staff are familiar with. If the CHC and Programs Committee places keynote, general and regular sessions, along with Mobile Workshops, into the Glance, it enables the chapter officials to understand the flow of your conference, and gives a head start to the Graphic Designer who prepares the Glance for posting to the website and, eventually, the program document.

**Assigning Individual Sessions to Session Blocks**

The assignment of the selected sessions to time slots [session blocks] is a process best done by a handful of Programs Committee members who have reviewed and selected the sessions, perhaps joined by another CHC member who can record where the sessions are placed. The outcome must have each session block with the assigned sessions and their track identified. The graphics design consultant will then be able to take your information and prepare an early version of the Conference at a Glance. Don’t worry about room assignments at this point.

An option for a successful approach: Use a large conference table that can accommodate all your session blocks, or use post-it notes color-coded by track with the session name. You can color-code your session titles by track, then take the first track and distribute its sessions into all your session blocks. You’ll have multiple sessions from the same track in the same session block – just check to make sure you don’t have a very similar topic in the same block. After distributing all sessions, go to all the sessions assigned to each session block and make sure you don’t have the same speaker assigned more than once in that block. [Staff will work with you to review as well. That is something to keep track of until the schedule is published since speakers are sometimes added late or are replaced.] Very importantly: you should not place more than one or two major sessions [you know what those are!] in the same session block; spread them and popular sessions among all the session blocks. Also, think about using the most popular sessions as early morning or late afternoon anchor-sessions to maintain your session attendance numbers.

You just might want to use a blank Glance to display your initial session distribution. Be sure to include the assigned track designator.

Once you assign your sessions and forward to the Graphic Designer and staff, staff will begin to prepare forms that can be used for submittal for CM credits to APA National. The form contains all the information that was submitted originally by the moderator, plus the day and time that the Programs Committee has assigned. It is that form that is then sent back out to the moderator to confirm title, abstract, moderator, speakers, time and date.

Note that if you are incorporating a concept such as “Law Day” into your program, you’ll want to provide enough Law CM credit sessions [that are also MCLE] through all sessions on one day. However, it would be good for the overall program to have some law sessions on other days. Ethics CM credit sessions are also ones to spread through the conference in case someone can only manage a 1-day registration.

Note also that certain of the “mandatory” sessions involve APA California Board members or staff. Board or other official meetings are sometimes held during regular session blocks. Check with the moderators of these sessions to assure that there are no conflicts for them with the session block you have assigned. For example, the APA California President has official duties at a number of plenary events and if on a session panel immediately before or after a plenary, it can have a negative impact on the individual or the session.

**Room Assignments**

Review all session block assignments with staff who can help you search and confirm that you have not double-booked a speaker. Once you determine that no more switching of session times will occur, the Programs Committee can assign sessions to rooms. This is an easier assignment if all your session rooms are large and are the same size. Otherwise, take time to think about which are most likely to be popular and put them in the larger rooms. A good way to get a sense of which sessions will be most popular - and therefore deserve the largest rooms - is to have each Programs Committee member predict which 2 or 3 sessions will attract the largest attendance and the smallest attendance in each session block. Compare the answers and order the sessions based on your committee’s attendance estimates. Match the list to the session rooms by their capacities and your room assignments are essentially done!

**Young Planners Group Sessions**

Young Planners are Chapter members who have less than five years of experience and are generally under 35 years old. These are our planners who are looking for learning and training opportunities, particularly at Chapter conferences. In 2009 several sessions were identify as “YPG” sessions, i.e., appropriate mentoring or learning opportunities and nuts & bolts sessions. In 2010, the YPG of the local section targeted ~2 sessions per session block as YPG. YPG is an additional identifier for sessions already located in conference session tracks – it is not a separate track. It is suggested that once the Programs Committee assigns sessions to session blocks that the YPG representative be given an opportunity to review the session descriptions and identify sessions within each block as YPG sessions.

Note also that in 2010 the Career Development Center set up by the YPG was successful. YPG members solicited seasoned professionals to be available to advise young planners in career choices. The work of the CHC is to help solicit those advisors.

**Mandatory Special Events that are the Responsibility of the Chapter or Other Group**

The VP of Conferences or designee must plan for, oversee, and include in the Conference Program Document the following special events:

Awards Ceremony: a suitable event must be planned for presentation of the annual awards during the conference. The time, location, menu, theme and decorations are the responsibility of the Chapter Vice-President of Administration and the State Awards Coordinator. The program and the awards are under his/her direction. The configuration of the stage/head table, etc. is their choice. Details of the program are left up to those individuals.

CPF Fundraiser and Auction: time must be made in the conference schedule for the CPF fundraiser and auction. The VP of Conferences or designee shall contact the CPF Board Conference Liaison as soon as possible to coordinate these activities. The nature of the fundraiser is determined by the CPF, which is responsible for all arrangement including the cost of any refreshments or entertainment provided, except for time in the program and designation of a prominent location at the conference which is provided by the Vice-President of Conferences with approval of the CPF Board Conference Liaison.

Student Conference and Student Awards Ceremony: The CHC’s Student Committee chair should work with the CPF Board Representative and the APA California Student Representative to develop and schedule a Student Conference and sessions and Student Awards Lunch to be held the afternoon of the day of the opening reception. The luncheon is the responsibility of CPF working with the Conference Coordinator, but developing a series of sessions oriented toward students is the responsibility of the CHC. The interest in an enhanced student program has grown in recent years. As of 2014, the Student Day idea is to have 2 concurrent sessions in the morning, then the luncheon, then 2 concurrent sessions in the afternoon. One of those sessions is traditionally a session produced by CPF. There are some presenters who like to focus on presenting to students or new planners. Involve local universities if they are within your Section and active with APA. The student attendees – about 100 of them, some attending the full conference also – appreciated the variety of sessions. [Note – Student Day is free to students, and if other conference attendees show up that day, they may also sit in on the student sessions.

Diversity Summit: The Membership Inclusion Director will work with the CHC and VP of Conferences to schedule a diversity summit. It is typically held just prior to the opening reception. The content of the Diversity Summit is the responsibility of Membership Inclusion Director, and any change in timing of the session should be coordinated with that Director.

**Special Events and Responsibility of the Conference Host Committee [CHC]**

Opening Reception: The CHC in coordination with both the Conference Coordinator and VP Conferences plans the Opening Reception, keeping in mind the cost of food and entertainment, and the ease of accessibility of the venue. The CHC plays an important role in identifying the theme; style of the opening reception and the Conference Coordinator works in collaboration with the CHC to assist with the facility details, needs and preparing a cost estimate for the event.

Plenary and Keynote Speakers: The CHC is also responsible for the keynote and plenary speakers, including the luncheon keynote. Brainstorming about these speakers should start at least a year prior to the conference. The speakers should be knowledgeable and vibrant – capable of being part of the advertising to solicit attendees to the conference. Topics may be planning-related. At least one session is encouraged to be an individual who can address innovation or leadership topics in a field other than planning – though have an appreciation for the profession. The APA California Board must approve all special events speakers desired by the CHC.

Don’t schedule too many keynote speakers! For example, if you have a plenary session lasting several hours on the last day of the conference, don’t also schedule a keynote presentation that day. Some conferences have both an opening keynote and a luncheon keynote. The only true expectation is for a luncheon keynote speaker on one of the two full days, with the other luncheon being the Awards Luncheon. Be sure that your keynote speakers are CM credit-worthy in order to attract your AICP members to the session.

**Pre-Conference Sessions – discussion under further development in accordance with Board direction January 2012**

In 2013 a new “Pre-Conference Session” program component began with two 6-hour [6 CM] sessions prior to the start of regular conference sessions. Depending on the overall conference schedule, these pre-conference sessions could be on a day that contains student programs and the Board meeting. Depending on the local, more than two sessions can be developed and accommodated.

The sessions should typically have 6 hours of CM credit which means 7 hours scheduled with a ½ hour lunch and 2 15-minute breaks.

FAICP members, CPR members and outside experts are sources of speakers and topics that should be considered.

**Required Leadership Meetings**

Leadership meetings will occur during the conference but are NOT the responsibility of the Programs Committee. Meeting rooms must be scheduled during the conference for the leadership meetings listed below. The Conference Coordinator will schedule the time and location of the meetings in coordination with the individual noted below who is responsible for organizing the meeting. These meetings will not pre-empt regular conference session rooms. The time and place of the meetings will be listed in the conference program document. The Conference Coordinator typically contacts the identified APA California Board member to finalize the title, date and time of the session when all other session moderators are contacted.

The VP of Conferences or designee will act as the liaison and point of contact for the Board and affiliated groups for all conference questions and coordination of affiliated group events. Each affiliated group (Planning Roundtable, CPF, PEN) is required to appoint a conference liaison who will act as the point of contact for the conference committee (Conference Coordinator) in setting up group events and activities. If no liaison is appointed, the President of the affiliated group will be the conference liaison.

1. APA California Board of Directors. Contact: APA California Administrative Director. This meeting must be scheduled the day of the opening reception.
2. California Planning Foundation Board of Directors. Contact: CPF President
3. California Planning Roundtable. Contact: Roundtable President
4. Planners Emeritus Network. Contact: PEN President
5. Chapter Student Representative with Section Student Representatives and Student Conference Attendees. Contact: Chapter Student Representative
6. Standing Conference Committee. Contact: President Elect/Immediate Past President
7. Professional Development Team Meeting. Contact: VP for Professional Development
8. Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners Meeting. Contact: VP for Professional Development
9. Other Professional Development Activities
10. President’s Leadership Reception
11. **CONFERENCE PROGRAM DOCUMENT**

**Developing and Finalizing the Program Document**

The first piece of the conference program document to be developed and refined is the Conference at a Glance. Once the conference shell is developed and the Programs Committee assigns sessions to session blocks, the Glance begins to be posted to the Chapter website to advertise the conference. Expect that the Glance will undergo many numbered and dated revisions. Each new version of the Glance is posted to the conference portion of the Chapter website. The Graphics Designer will direct you on the timing of your review of the Glance to make sure it is the latest information possible.

The next step of program development occurs when the staff provides the Graphic Designer information for each submitted regular session as well as write-ups for keynotes and plenary sessions. [The Programs Committee should expect to write up the keynote descriptions for not only the program document but also for submittal to APA National for CM credit.]

The effort to finalize the conference program will start about 2 months prior to the conference. All changes, even last minute changes, must be completed 2 weeks prior to the conference.

While the bulk of the program is the daily session-by-session listing, the first part of the program provides important information. Some of the pieces have probably been written up for Cal Planner articles in the prior year. The Graphics Designer will provide an outline of the information to be included, but program tabs can usually be:

* General Information [details based on your conference; includes [e.g.] registration & exhibitor information and hours, attire, electronic devices, disability advisory, availability of presentations on APA website, local dining options, CM credit info
* Conference at a Glance [including separate CM Law & Ethics sessions listing]
* Highlights - Special Events [based on your conference; includes Mobile Workshops & Keynotes, opening reception, awards luncheon, CPF events, consultant reception, breakfasts, career development center, sustainability discussions]
* Day 1 tab printed with sessions/events that day [day of opening reception]
* Day 2 tab printed with sessions/events that day
* Day 3 tab printed with sessions/events that day
* Day 4 tab printed with sessions/events for closing day
* Sponsor Ads
* Notes & Room Location [always include a site map, not just room layout and names, even if the rooms are located close together.]
* In even numbered years, the awards program should include a list of Californians newly inducted into the Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners. The VP for Professional Development will provide this information to VP of Administration.

1. **SESSION RECORDINGS, ELECTRONIC RETENTION OF PRESENTATIONS, and THE MOBILE APPLICATION – REVISE PENDING DISCUSSION OF TAPED SESSIONS**

The Chapter conference has come into the 21st century. We are primarily electronic, though a printed conference program is given/made available to each attendees upon registration check-in. Some attendees handle all program review, including session selection and speaker bio information, via our Mobile App.

In past years, tapes were made of conference sessions and sold individually or in sets. That practice was discontinued some years ago. Occasionally, now, some conference sessions may be audio recorded for future use in a CM lending library. The Programs Committee should check in with the VP of Professional Development to see if there is a need for sessions to be recorded at your conference. The Chapter will pay for audio recording sessions if they will become part of the library. If they are not needed, the Chapter may decline. The CHC would need to decide if they want to pay to record a session of particular interest to them, or one that they think is exceptional and should be made available.

Printed copies of handouts are no longer allowed at sessions. Communications with moderators should indicate this, and direct that all presentations should be forwarded to APA California staff for posting to the Chapter website following the conference. The acquisition of these presentations is generally successful – staff generally receives a majority of presentations. Some attendees obtain them through direct communication with the presenters.

Are presentations available on the Mobile App? Detail the Mobile App here.

1. **CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE [CM] CREDIT**

Because AICP members are seeking to maintain their status by accumulating 32 CM credits in a 2 year period, and because some AICP members depend on conference attendance as their primary, or only, source of CM credit, the bottom line calculation for provision of available CM credit should be 16 CM for an attendee. This is not the total number of CM credits available, it is what an individual can accumulate by attending most or all plenary and regular session blocks.

With few exceptions, each regular session at the annual Chapter conference can be submitted to APA National for CM credit for AICP members. The few sessions which do not get submitted are aimed at attendees with less experience than required for AICP members, e.g., student sessions; some introductory sessions; the session on how to take the AICP exam. Keynote and plenary sessions are also submitted. The Awards Luncheon has been alternatively approved and not approved for CM credit – experience finds it is not worth the frustration dealing with APA National’s questions and extra documentation often requested.

CM credit is applied for at a 1.0 session hour for 1.0 CM credit. Mobile workshops are submitted for the instructional/touring time as well as travel time to the extent that time can be made instructional. The CM forms are submitted to APA National by staff.

Approval by APA National typically takes about 4-6 weeks, so it is important to finalize sessions and speakers, including mandatory ones, as well as mobile workshops, ahead of this 4-6 week period to give staff time to prepare CM forms for submittal.

In order for APA [National] to continue to grant CM credit for APA California conference sessions, they require a review from each AICP member evaluating the CM-approved sessions attended. Only one completed form per AICP member for the entire conference is required. It is critical to the continued ability of APA California to provide CM credit-worthy sessions that a substantial number of AICP member fill out the “AICP EVALUATION FORM FOR CM APPROVED SESSIONS”. The CHC should assure that CM Evaluation forms are provided to all AICP members when they register. These forms are anonymous. They should be collected before AICP members leave the conference. An earnest explanation to AICP members about the importance of the form at the conference’s plenary sessions and in writing on the form and in the conference program document seem to get positive results.

Following the conference, a conference committee member should review the forms and summarize pertinent information, particularly to pass on to the next year’s conference committee. Staff will retain the forms for the record and for possible audit by APA National.

1. **MOBILE WORKSHOPS**

Mobile Workshops [MW] are an exciting and critical part of a conference program. The method of selection of MWs is at the CHC discretion. It may be that the CHC brainstorms ideas, comes up with a list, and then solicits section members to lead the workshops, detailing out the tour content and logistics. Or, the CHC can more broadly ask section members for their proposals for MWs.

Mobile workshops should be developed concurrently with the timing of the CFP. As soon as your mobile workshops are identified, they can be written up and promoted in the Cal Planner.

Here are some general guidelines:

* Half-day mobile workshops are preferred to avoid constraints of meals away from the conference site and MW participants possibly having too much non-CM credit time.
* For an all-day [or ‘go-through-lunch’] workshop, it is beneficial – and an advertising opportunity - to have the lunch be sponsored by the proposer. If a sponsor is not an option, the conference will provide a box lunch [either from the hotel or from somewhere on the way] or the moderator can arrange for lunch out on the tour. If you go with that option, be sure to check with the Conference Coordinator about the maximum $$ that can be spent per attendee.
* Half-day MWs should go out after the opening speaker, if there is one and if possible. More importantly, morning MWs should be back in time to allow attendees to go to the day’s luncheon. Afternoon MWs should return by 5pm or 6pm – depending on the starting time of evening events.
* MW leaders will need to fill out the a session submission form that is the same as those for regular session submitters since CM information is required and a description of the MW is needed for the program. The MW submission form should include an additional page to capture transportation or trip cost information as well as general route information and non-instructional travel time. The Mobile Workshop Coordinator of the CHC will be responsible for sending these forms to the MW moderators to fill out. See Appendix H for a sample form that can be used to keep track of MW logistical information.
* MW leaders will need to provide time and transportation requirements to the CHC during the process in order to allow the cost of the MW to be calculated and disclosed in the Early Registration materials. A sample form that can be used for MW tracking and analysis is found in Appendix H.
* All-day or more-than-1/2 day MWs are okay on one of the 2 full days of the conference. They are preferred on the day of an awards luncheon [vs. on the day of a keynote luncheon]. The all-day MWs should go out after participants have a chance to grab the continental breakfast during its announced time.
* The conference will provide snacks for all MWs.
* Aim for up to 10 mobile workshops.

Keep up email communications with the MW leaders as you do with the session moderators. MW leaders will want to know the status of the signups for their workshops; you will know these numbers as the registration numbers start coming to you from the Conference Coordinator. For some MWs it’s important to get a sense of whether it will be a large number of attendees or a smaller group. Some MWs may have to set a maximum number of signups if there’s a limit or clearance required from a workshop stop. See Appendix H for sample emails to MW coordinators.

The Conference Coordinator can gauge about 30 days prior to the conference, based on early registration, whether a mobile workshop is in danger of being cancelled. It may be that one or more mobile workshops gets cancelled at this time, or at least put on watch, if there are 5 or fewer signups. Note: ~10 signups is a number to keep in mind to know whether a mobile workshop will be feasible – the key being it won’t lose money - given the variety of bus sizes available these days. The Mobile Workshop Coordinator may want to give a heads up to those individual workshop leaders if there’s a thought that their workshop might be cancelled. Even though it is has been said in emails giving all the coordinators an interim attendance number, the moderators won’t necessarily sense that their own workshop is in danger.

AT the conference expect that there may be a few signups for mobile workshops with on-site registration, or even at the bus just prior to departure. Some conference attendees have indicated that they routinely wait until they are on-site to sign up for mobile workshops. Try not to turn away those interested in signing up on the spot for a MW until you’re sure that the bus won’t have a seat for them. Unfortunately, sometimes individuals signed up cannot make the MW, and their seat becomes available.

[NOT INCLUDED FOR BOARD REVIEW IN JANUARY 2014]

Forms included in Appendix H related to this manual chapter are:

* Format for session sorting/selection
* Listing for selected sessions, including mandatory and local sessions
* Moderator email samples – 3 emails
* CM Conference Evaluation Form
* Mobile Workshop listing matrix
* Mobile Workshop email samples – 4 emails
* Mobile Workshop logistics tracking sheet