

**DATE: February 2, 2018**

**TO: APA California Chapter Board**

**FROM: Hanson Hom, AICP, Vice President Conferences**

**SUBJECT: REVISIONS TO CONFERENCE REQUIREMENTS HANDBOOK**

Recommended Action:

*Approve the revisions to the Conference Requirements Handbook dated October 2016 as outlined in this report and change the Handbook approval date to February 2018.*

Discussion:

The Conference Requirements Handbook is an essential document that details the conference requirements and provides guidelines to the VP Conferences, Conference Host Committee (CHC), Conference Contractors and Chapter Board Members for planning a successful Chapter conference. The Handbook directs the VP Conferences to review the document after each conference to update it as necessary to reflect the latest practices, and to suggest revisions and additions to respond to issues that may have arisen during the planning of the last conference. Major policy-level or substantive amendments require the approval of the Chapter Board, while non-substantive changes can be done by the VP Conferences with consultation of the Chapter President if advisable.

The Handbook is an excellent resource that covers a complex conference planning process, but can be daunting to absorb. The VP Conferences conducted a comprehensive review of the Handbook and is proposing edits throughout the document to improve its usefulness. (Refer to attached redlined version.)

The vast majority of revisions are non-substantive. Most of the changes achieve the following outcomes:

* Clarify certain sections without altering requirements or guidelines;
* Reduce redundancy in certain sections; and
* Revise the text where appropriate to provide a more concise and succinct discussion.

Other revisions reflect recent updates in conference planning procedures and guidelines, such as:

* Responsibilities of the new Conference Management Contractor per the executed contract;
* Role of the recently created Chapter-appointed Conference Program Coordinator in conference planning (2017 was the first year for this position);
* Pending use of APA national for registration services for the Chapter’s conference; and
* Conference profit policy as amended by the Board in September 2017.

The substantive amendments proposed for Board review and approval are as follows:

**Article I: Provide greater flexibility in considering a Sunday start date for the conference.**

*Comment: While Saturday is still indicated as the preferred start date, recent conferences, including the upcoming 2018 and 2019 conferences, have found that a Sunday start date is more advantageous for valid reasons.*

**Article II.A: Delegate the Chapter President to approve contractor contracts, with Board approval required where contract terms may have significant financial or operational implications on the Chapter.**

*Comment: Currently, the Board is required to approve ALL contractor contracts. This revision will streamline the approval process for contractor contracts that do not raise major financial or operational issues.*

**Article III.F Allow the VP Conferences to approve the Sponsorship Program developed by each CHC with consultation with the Chapter President or Chapter Board as needed.**

 *Comment: Currently, the VP Conferences AND Board must approve the Sponsorship Program for each conference. Sponsorship programs are generally consistent with past conferences and do not vary significantly from year to year. Board approval does not seem necessary unless a significant departure from past practice is proposed. The Board also reviews the sponsorship goal as part of its approval of the conference budget.*

**Article III.K Add the Conference Program Coordinator to the list of individuals receiving a discounted conference registration.**

*Comment: The discount would be equivalent to the registration fee for CHC Subcommittee Chairs.*

**Article VI.D Add the following provision regarding sharing attendee contact information with major sponsors:**

“The list of email and postal addresses of registered conference attendees are available upon request to major conference sponsors, generally those that purchase a package with an exhibit booth. All other conference sponsors do not have access to this list. Sponsors requesting the list shall not share it with any other individual or group and shall only distribute information that directly pertains to the conference, such as booth information or hosted receptions. Consistent with the policy for APA national conferences, the registration program shall include an opt-out provision for attendees that do not want their email and postal addresses shared with sponsors.”

*Comment*: *Access to attendee contact information is an attractive benefit for some major conference sponsors. However, the sensitivity concerning privacy and potential misuse of contact information is understandable. This provision is consistent with a recently enacted policy by APA national to balance sponsorship objectives with privacy concerns.*