

Timeline for Planning and Hosting a Grassroots Workshop or Conference

3 to 6 Months before the Event

1. Who (The Planning Team)

Choose individuals at your own site who have the time and knowledge to organize a big event. Or, contact supervisors in your general geographic area about working together to put on a workshop.

2. Where

Locate and arrange for the room(s) - size of rooms available may limit # of registrants and the dates of the conference/workshop

3. When

Things to consider: the school schedules in your area (avoid first week or two of classes; weekends are better than weekdays to avoid having to get subs for classes); weather/travel; availability of room(s) and presenter(s)

4. What and Who (The Presentations)

Identify Topic(s) and Presenter(s)

Things to consider: needs and interests of the service providers/administrators/consumers; expertise of potential presenters; presenter expenses and decide how to deal with that question - avoid "Call for Presentations" approach: too complicated and time-consuming

5. How:

- A. Plan registration fee. To determine what you have to charge, consider your costs: fee to presenter, cost of interpreters & speech-to-text providers, room-use costs, refreshments, lunches?, notebooks, printing, badges, attendance certificates; consider arranging for RID CEU approval & CART CEU approval; STSN PDU/CEU forms
- B. Set up bank account and choose one of the Planners to handle the money and keep accounts. All planners should get regular update about funds. You'll want to divest of nearly all the money at the conclusion of the conference, to avoid need to set up a not-for-profit entity
- C. Advertise widely - staggered registration dates are helpful for planning (early-bird, regular, at the door);
- set number of attendees and hold to it
- D. Acknowledge receipt of registration forms/fees, and send out directions and agenda, or at least a receipt and a map to the conference site (e.g., map to and of the campus).

The Day of the Event

1. Have clear signage posted several hours before the first person is likely to show up, directing people from the parking lot(s) to the conference/workshop room
2. Have a Registration table staffed at all times, to distribute name tags and notebooks; be prepared to take money from late registrants; have a few extra notebooks and blank name tags

3. Have simple refreshments available, "guarded" if you are in a public place open to others; Arrange for trash bins and recycling boxes for cups, bottles and other recyclables
4. Have a clearly designated place to put Conference Feedback Forms.
5. Arrange to give out Attendance Certificates to those who attend from whole workshop/conference

Within a Week After the Event:

1. Analyze the course evaluations to learn how to improve next time, and to bask in the praise of your efforts!
2. Send thank you notes to presenters and panel members, with gift certificates to divest of any left over funds.
3. Set date for next workshop/conference and let people know so they can mark their calendar