

AFFILIATE MEETINGS

Your affiliate bylaws may mandate that you hold affiliate meetings. These meetings help keep members engaged and provide members with a chance to network. It is important that affiliates hold effective meetings.

Meetings and Programs

Meetings and programs *are* different. While they may be combined, they have two different functions, and it is important to understand those functions.

Meetings are internally focused on your operations. Programs are activities, continuing educations or presentations that offer something of value to members. You might consider that meetings, while necessary, are not generally exciting and may be of no interest to the bulk of your membership. Programs, on the other hand, can be interesting, worthwhile, and valuable.

Meetings are necessary and important. They are where the “work” of the affiliate takes place, decisions are made, and plans developed. Most associations and membership organizations typically meet only once a year in an annual meeting. In between meetings, the business of the association is carried out by the Board of Directors.

MEETING TIPS

Meetings should have a purpose. Meetings should not be held simply for the sake of holding a meeting. A regular Board meeting exists to track and monitor the organization’s activity and progress towards objectives.

Meetings should have an agenda. We recommend that agendas be planned and not based on a “first reports, followed by old business and then new business” model. If you have an important issue it should come early in the agenda. Using this technique, a Board can focus its energy and attention on what is critical for the organization.

We recommend that affiliates consider using “consent agenda” for regular reports rather than having them presented at the Board meeting. A consent agenda is a list of regular reports that is supplied to members of the Board before the meeting allowing time for board members to review them. The entire list of reports, the agenda, can then be accepted as a group. If Board members have questions regarding a report they can ask that it be “pulled” for specific attention during the meeting. Consent agendas are an excellent way of saving time and energy. If you have questions about using a consent agenda, please consult with your Region Representative. This format is used by the national Board of Directors to accept reports.

The organization’s finance statement should not be included in a consent agenda. A finance statement needs to be presented, reviewed, and approved at each Board meeting. Just like regular reports, it should be sent to Board members in advance whenever possible.



Note: ACNM Affiliate Bylaws state that meetings should be run using Roberts Rules of Order. However, the Board may make changes that supersede Roberts for procedural issues such as consent agendas.

PROGRAM TIPS

During programs, members can check in with other members, network, and participate in a program or activity. Some of the same rules apply for meetings and programs:

Make sure you have a reason for the program or activity. There needs to be a purpose and an agenda for each program.

Be organized and on time. Appearing unorganized or last minute will make the affiliate look unprofessional and unattractive. Start and end on time; this is very important in the long term.

Allow enough time for communicating and marketing your events. Keep people informed and ensure that notices and invitations go out early.

Can you mix business and program together? You can, but do it carefully. Generally the majority of your members are interested in the program and not the business part of a meeting. Having a few short announcements about plans and progress before a meeting makes good sense but try to keep it short.

To save travel and time for your leadership, consider having your Board meeting (business) before the program meeting on the same day at the same place. Interested members may want to come to the Board meeting. Plan on a break before the program part of the meeting to ensure you are set up and start on time.

Planning a Program

Holding a program is a great way to bring the membership of the affiliate together to foster community and engage the members. But planning the program can be daunting. We have developed a step-by-step guide to break down responsibilities to help you recruit volunteers and plan a successful meeting; this guide can be found in here.

