

# Information for Planning Committees

## Developing Events in the Michigan District LCMS

Dear Planning Committee Members,

Thank you for your part in planning a conference for the congregations and / or church workers of the Michigan District LCMS. The time and effort that is spent by volunteers of the various conferences of the District is indispensable and probably unmeasurable. Your participation helps the District in its purpose of bolstering congregation leadership.

We have assembled the information in this brochure to help make you aware of not only by-law and governmental requirements, but also to ensure you are aware of the resources that the District can provide to your committee. We appreciate your help in complying with the policies and procedures of the District. In no way do we intend these operational issues to interfere in your dreaming, planning, and control of the conference. We need you – and we deeply appreciate your help.

Thank you again and may God bless your conference and planning!

### DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

Michigan District LCMS  
3773 Geddes Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

www.michigandistrict.org

734.665.3791  
888.225.2111  
Fax 734.665.0255

**Event Coordinator**, Carol Cohrs [carol.cohrs@michigandistrict.org](mailto:carol.cohrs@michigandistrict.org)

Carol is your primary staff contact for the operations side of your conference planning. She is available and willing to assist you in almost any aspect of your conference, such as hotel and facility arrangements, pre-registrations, name tags, on-site registration, or hotel contact.

### Various District Executives

Your primary staff contact on the program side of your conference will be an executive staff member. If you are unsure who this is, please speak to Carol.

**Director of Communications**, Debby Fall [debby.fall@michigandistrict.org](mailto:debby.fall@michigandistrict.org)

Debby can assist you in publicizing your conference through the District's communication channels including the e-bulletin, *Michigan In Touch*, and the District website.

**VP-Finance/Business Manager**, Chad Woltemath [chad.woltemath@michigandistrict.org](mailto:chad.woltemath@michigandistrict.org)  
**Assistant to the Business Manager**, Donna Conrad [donna.conrad@michigandistrict.org](mailto:donna.conrad@michigandistrict.org)

Donna is the first contact for incoming checks and payment requests. She can provide forms and other financial information to your committee. Chad signs all legal contracts for the District and has general supervision of the business office of the District. He can answer general questions about budget, finances, and policies.

### **ATTENDANCE/REGISTRATION/DATABASE**

The database at the District Office (DERIC) contains the names of all professional church workers and many lay workers, working in the congregations of the Michigan District. We can therefore easily handle the registration process for the committee and will attempt to provide any special tracking the committee needs. We can also provide appropriate mailing labels for all congregations, pastors, and commissioned workers.

### **CONTRACTS**

For legal reasons, the District must limit the number of agents that can sign documents on its behalf. The Board of Directors has authorized the Vice-President of Finance (Business Manager) to sign general contracts such as hotel, catering, rental, and service agreements. The planning committee is responsible for negotiating contracts, but is not authorized to sign them. Carol Cohrs should be consulted when dealing with hotels in order to ensure everything is in order, including arrangements for payment (we have open billing accounts with several hotels already) and persons authorized to charge to our account during the event. She can also be consulted on other contracts. The final negotiated contracts should list "Michigan District LCMS" as the contract party and should be forwarded to the business office for signature. Liability, indemnification, and insurance clauses in contracts are becoming more tedious and often require both legal and insurance approvals before the District can enter into the contract. Please allow at least two weeks for the District to seek these approvals before contract execution due dates.

### **DISTRICT OFFICE BUILDING**

The District Office Building is available for committee meetings and conferences that require meeting space for 25 or less. Contact Debbie Austin for availability.

### **EQUIPMENT**

The District has some equipment suitable for traveling to events and committees may request their use. Once the equipment is listed on the calendar for the event, it will be reserved for that group. Available equipment includes:

- Video projectors (various lumens and features)

- Portable video system (includes DVD, VCR, three computer inputs and video source switcher)

- Video cable collection – with video cables up to 100 feet for connecting projectors and video system

- Portable wireless microphones (2), including lavalieres and "nearly invisible" microphones

- Portable Speakers

- 2-way commercial radios (set of 10 with battery chargers)

- Mobile laptop computer lab – with 10 Windows XP computers and wireless router

- Display tabletops

- Other: Televisions, Communion ware, Overhead projectors, Easels

Most hotels and other hosts are able to provide microphones and speaker systems, podiums, and screens for free or at nominal rental fees. Hotels will typically charge rental fees for overhead projectors, TV monitors, VCRs, and pianos.

### **FINANCIAL ISSUES**

The following are accounting policies currently in place at the District that directly affect most events. For more information please contact the Business Manager.

#### **Budget**

Budgets are submitted through the Executive Staff person assigned to your conference and are typically begun in July for the following fiscal year (which begins Feb 1).

A committee will be held responsible for the net cost (revenue less expenditures) of an event. This means the committee should hold expenses to the revenue generated by the event plus any support dollars provided by the District or other entities.

#### **Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)**

The District is required to prepare its financial statements according to GAAP and will apply GAAP to all its accounting procedures. For example, registrations collected and deposits paid for a following fiscal year will be recorded as deferred revenue and prepaid expenses respectively on the financial statements. The items will be matched to the year the conference takes place.

#### **Grants**

All District committees seeking third-source funding (grants, gifts, etc.) are asked to communicate their intentions with the Vice President of Development, Ray Zavada. ray.zavada@michigandistrict.org

#### **Interest**

No interest income will be allocated to a specific conference.

#### **Payment of Expenses**

A committee treasurer is typically appointed to serve as the financial liaison between the committee and the business office. The business office will attempt to coordinate expenditure approvals with an appointed treasurer before payment. Payment and mileage vouchers are available from Donna Conrad. Typical vouchers will request payment for honorariums, supplies, services, mileage for committee meetings (within the budget), and travel and/or mileage for the speakers.

### **Registrations**

All checks should be made payable to "Michigan District LCMS" and mailed to the District Office. Donna Conrad will note the amount received, date, and check number on the registration form. The form can be forwarded to the appropriate registrar, either in the building or outside, on a timetable mutually agreeable to the committee and the business office. Events with limited registration, cut-offs can be arranged with Donna.

### **Sales Tax**

The District is typically exempt from Sales Tax in the State of Michigan for purchases from its funds that promote its exempt purposes. If the District is acting as a conduit for the funds (such as collecting a registration fee to pay for meals and/or lodging), then the source of funds for the purchase must be tracked to determine the taxability of a purchase. If the funds can be traced to another exempt organization, then the purchase is exempt. If the funds are traced to an individual or non-exempt entity, then appropriate tax must be remitted for a portion of the purchase either to the vendor or directly to the State of Michigan. The committee may decide to charge extra for the tax or just pay the tax out of conference funds. Help is available from the business office in determining the taxability of an event and setting up registration forms accordingly.

### **GENERAL EVENT INFORMATION**

The District requests detailed information (including target audience and core value alignment) during the budgeting process as well as a follow-up report at the end of each conference in order to evaluate the effectiveness of its conferences and gain feedback for future conferences. Please provide this information to the Executive Staff assigned to your event and consider evaluation forms for your participants.

### **HEALTH ISSUES FOR EVENTS**

Committees will want to concern themselves with the health and welfare of event participants, in particular the professional church workers as there are many professional and personal growth goals that they address each year. Some of the issues your committee will want to address include:

- ◆ Balanced meals and provide participant with the opportunity to acknowledge restricted diet needs.
- ◆ Balanced time for learning, personal reflection, networking and physical "exercise."
- ◆ Expectation of personal "refreshment" as an outcome for each participant.

Check in with the Health Advocate Committee for suggestions to apply these goals. Contact Catherine Lick, RN at 248.689.4664.

### **HONORARIUMS**

Honorarium amounts are a decision of the committee, but guidelines are often sought out. Committees sometimes use a rate of \$80 - \$140 per speaking hour, plus travel and housing expenses for speakers and presenters.

Committee members should be reimbursed mileage and direct expenses. The District will not reimburse volunteers or their congregations for time off work or substitute teacher expenses. Also, no stipend is to be given for service on a District Committee.

### **INSURANCE**

If your committee has special insurance needs or needs a certificate of insurance for the hotel or host, please contact the Business Manager for the proper paperwork. Liability, indemnification, and insurance clauses in contracts are becoming more tedious and often require both legal and insurance approvals before the District can enter into the contract. Please allow two weeks for the District to seek these approvals before contract execution due dates.

### **PURCHASES**

The District has open accounts with numerous vendors, often with discounts. The staff would be happy to order supplies and other items on the committee's behalf. In addition, we are often able to open accounts with vendors we currently do not have accounts with. Please contact Donna Conrad with requests for orders or accounts.

### **PUBLICITY**

Publicity includes announcing to a specific audience along with a general audience any information concerning the event. This most often includes a letter of information, a registration form, an invitation, and/or a brochure. The mediums used by the District include direct mailings (first class and bulk), e-bulletin, *Michigan In Touch*, and the District website. The deadlines for *Michigan In Touch* are as follows:

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| December/January | October 1  |
| February/March   | December 1 |
| April/May        | February 1 |
| June/July        | April 1    |
| August/September | June 1     |
| October/November | August 1   |

Please contact the Communications department for more information.

### **VENDORS**

If exhibitors/vendors will be invited to participate, please see Carol Cohrs regarding vendor contracts.

## Committee Check List

This comprehensive list will establish an activity list, along with answers that will guide you to set up a general budget. Not all points listed will necessarily apply to all groups.

### Planning

- Set Dates\*
- Speaker(s) -- who
- Develop a General Budget
- Agenda
- Theme - main topic, Bible verse, main purpose, target audience; Logo (banner?)
- Develop list of Committee assignments

### Arrangements

- Host - contracts with hotel and/or caterer
- Room blocks
- Menus
- Vendor details, including possible contract for them
- General session and/or break-out space
- Worship arrangements
- Registration - will it be print and/or online
- Speaker travel & contract arrangements
- Speaker other arrangements - room set-up, equipment, will he/she provide materials to participants? It is suggested you send a memo to the speakers requesting equipment needs, room set-up, and approximate material page count early in the planning process. You can always update later.

**Publicity** This time frame varies with specific conferences, but most require registration material to be mailed at least two months ahead of the event. Some require more lead-time, even six to nine months.

- Letter of invitation to explain event to audience
- Michigan In Touch* article(s) bi-monthly; announcements for E-bulletin weekly
- Web page - ready for upload or rough ideas
- Brochure - design (check for print deadlines)
- Registration form - print and/or build webpage for registration fields

### Confirmation Process

- Who will mail confirmation? [Generally done by email for most conferences]
- Will there be a separate confirmation packet with information for attendees only?

### Pre-Event

- Final Agenda and Final Budget

### Event

- Registration process - need tables, name tags, material or hand outs for attendees?
- Finalize worship arrangements
- Speaker needs - equipment and material support

### Final Accounting

- Honorariums - get checks from District one week before event
- Follow-up thank-you's, especially if host is other than hotel
- Pay bills (within two weeks of event date)
- Final reports to District Executive or other organization

\* If this is a District Event, check with the District Office to make sure the date is open and put it on the District Calendar, then confirm the date with your speakers and your location.