

PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

Special Attention of:	NOTICE PIH 96-50(HA)
Resident Organizations; Public Housing Agencies; Indian Housing Authorities; Section 8 Public Housing Agencies and Indian Housing Authorities; Secretary's Representatives; State/Area Coordinators; Directors, Public Housing and Administrators of Native American Programs.	Issued: 7/12/96
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	Cross References:

Subject: GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORING OR CO-SPONSORING TRAINING CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

1. BACKGROUND

The Office of Public and Indian Housing has, over the years, sponsored and/or supported a variety of conferences and workshops with training sessions to assist public and Indian housing officials and residents in achieving their goals and objectives. Such activities can be an effective and efficient way toward achieving specific program results. Increasingly, there are organizations interested in sponsoring training conferences and workshops at their own initiative which lack specific guidance on what to do and any restrictions to be aware of when HUD funds are involved.

2. PURPOSE

To assist organizations in the planning and conducting of training conferences, workshops, etc., this notice transmits guidance on considerations to be made from getting started through evaluating the success of any event held. These guidelines, in the form of basic DOs and DON'Ts, are intended for use by resident organizations in particular as well as other sponsors or co-sponsors of training conferences and workshops. The guidelines should also be useful to attendees of such conferences and workshops or other widely attended gatherings. HUD has a responsibility to make sure trainees using HUD source funds get the best results from training conferences and workshops attended and the most value for their training dollar. With diminishing Federal resources, we need to assure that any training conferences really help the trainees learn skills and obtain knowledge.

These guidelines are not applicable to employees of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Office of General Counsel (OGC) has issued guidelines for HUD-sponsored

events and HUD attendance at privately sponsored events and will issue guidance on co-sponsored events for HUD employees.

3. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

The basic purpose of any training conference or workshop is to provide educational and training information directly, through person-to-person contact, to a target audience that has a shared need for the information to build capacity and develop new skills. Often, such an event combines the use of speakers to cover broad topics, breakout workshops on various subjects concurrently, and more intensive training sessions at a very detailed level of instruction. In the case of training supported with HUD resources, there should be a clear relationship to a HUD program objective, including compliance with any specific requirements of the HUD funding source.

DOs and DON'Ts

These DOs and DON'Ts guidelines are provided for specific use by all organizations or individuals involved in sponsoring or co-sponsoring events concerning public or Indian housing operations and assistance with HUD funding sources. Individuals or organizations attending such events should also find these guidelines helpful in understanding what to expect from such events. They are listed below in the general order of steps to be taken in the planning for and conducting of the event. Additional information about each item is attached.

DO:

- ▶ Identify the target audience and the specific needs of that audience.
- ▶ Define the purpose of the event clearly.
- ▶ List what is needed by subject area and how to respond to the need.
- ▶ Develop specific plans in terms of scope, location, etc.
- ▶ Determine the need for co-sponsorship.
- ▶ Schedule the event with adequate time for preparations.
- ▶ Respond to the needs identified.
- ▶ Establish reasonable fees to charge attendees, if necessary.

- ▶ Develop and distribute a combined announcement and reply form.
- ▶ Confirm that speakers, panelists, trainers, will be ready.
- ▶ Require attendees to register formally in writing.
- ▶ Complete an evaluation of sessions attended.
- ▶ Maintain administrative and financial records for the event.
- ▶ Conduct a post-meeting analysis of the evaluations made by attendees.
- ▶ Comply with applicable Federal requirements for use of Federal funds, e.g., OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Where HUD or other Federal funds are used by either the sponsoring organization in the planning and conducting of the conference or workshop, and/or by attendees of such events, there are certain restrictions that need to be observed. These are listed below in the form of DON'Ts, and additional information about each item is attached.

DON'T:

- ▶ Devote the conference or workshop to sales of products or services.
- ▶ Limit a conference or workshop attended only to HUD employees.
- ▶ Design a conference or workshop for a purely social, celebratory, or political fund raising event.
- ▶ Use HUD equipment, supplies, or postage-paid envelopes.
- ▶ Set registration fees to exceed the costs for the event.
- ▶ Invite HUD (or other Federal) attendees to a VIP suite, provide any complimentary ticket to activities such as an award banquet, special recreational shows, etc.
- ▶ Overemphasize Federal participants in announcing the event.

- ▶ Include a lobbying activity to influence the Government.

5. INFORMATION CONTACT

Please refer any inquiry regarding these guidelines to the Community Relations and Involvement specialist in your servicing HUD field office. HUD employees who require guidance on sponsoring or co-sponsoring events or attending or participating in events sponsored by others should contact the Assistant General Counsel, Ethics Law Division at (202) 708-3815.

/s/Kevin Emanuel Marchman, Acting
Assistant Secretary for Public
and Indian Housing

Attachment

DOs - ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The list of DOs is restated below with additional information about the considerations to be made:

- a. Identify the target audience and the specific needs of that audience.

There must be a general consensus among the individuals involved that some specific need exists for which a transfer of information in a person-to-person manner would be the best response (as opposed to getting or distributing informational material by fax, mail, on-site technical assistance, etc.).

Make a concerted effort to contact other resident organizations, associations, etc., as to whether the need has been addressed by others before and, if so, how, what was done, and what the outcome was. This may save a lot of time and avoid a duplication of effort.

- b. Clearly define the purpose of the event.

The purpose must be directly related to the mission and programs of the Office of Public and Indian Housing, Office of Community Relations and Involvement at HUD and/or the regulations and procedures governing the operations of low-income public and Indian housing.

- c. Make a list of what is needed by subject area and how to respond to the need.

For each subject area, decide how to provide the information needed, e.g., a speaker in a plenary session, available video, technical advisors/trainers in breakout sessions, etc. Identify appropriate reference material needed or to be developed for each subject area. Keep the subject area for a possible conference or workshop fairly confined so that the subject matter can be treated comprehensively and completely.

Often, the planning for a conference or workshop becomes very broad in order to respond to a wide range of needs but the result can be unproductive if there is too much to comprehend and the subject matter is covered too quickly.

Generally, a large, plenary session should be avoided since more detail is usually provided in later breakout sessions and the general session uses precious time. A plenary

session is good, for example, to tell everyone about the planned activities and expectations for the entire conference and for a special speaker. Learning is best achieved in small, classroom situations.

- d. Develop specific plans in terms of scope, location, etc.

In addition to the subject matter, consideration must be given to making the event local, regional, or national, estimating the size/number of attendees, time of year, specific dates/days of the week, and location/availability of conferencing facilities. The location is important to make it convenient for travelers to be able to get there easily at reasonable cost and to enjoy their stay.

It may be possible to do a cost benefit comparison between various choices to help pick the better place to have the event. The decision on where to locate the event needs to be able to justify why the event can't be held locally or on the East coast versus West coast, for instance. A resort type location should not be considered because it is a distraction for attendees from the business of the event and could result in misimpressions about the nature of the event.

- e. Determine the need for co-sponsorship.

In combination with item d. above and in looking at the scope of the subject matter, consideration should be given to having a co-sponsor for the event to get needed assistance for the planning and conduct of the event from an organization that has experience and knowledge of the subject, e.g., a national association, HUD, a housing authority, etc. If co-sponsorship is deemed appropriate, the co-sponsor needs to be invited in writing providing needed information on the scope and subject matter of the event and the proposed role of the co-sponsor (check with the potential co-sponsor for the information needed).

- f. Schedule the event with adequate time for preparations.

Develop a timeline with all the activities to be conducted in planning and conducting the event listed and realistic times for accomplishing each item. Allow several weeks after the announcement of the event for the target audience to learn about it and have time to respond and plan their availability. For a regional or national level event, allow at least 2 months following the announcement since long

distance travel will be required and more time is needed to make arrangements.

- g. Search for local sources of information to respond to the needs identified.

Try state/county/city governments, libraries, colleges, universities, housing authorities, HUD field offices, etc. to identify qualified speakers and trainers as well as materials that may be available. Review the qualifications of the candidate speakers/trainers and make primary and backup choices for participants. Ask contacts made for advice on planning the conference to augment your efforts as well. Keep records of contacts made and any assistance or advice offered. Send written invitations to and obtain commitments from speakers, panelists, trainers, etc., to attend at the time and location planned.

- h. Establish reasonable fees to charge attendees, if necessary.

It may not always be necessary to charge a fee if the sponsor can pay for all related costs to the sponsor and attendees pay their own expenses independently. However, if all or part of the cost of an event is to be paid for from registration fees, applicable costs must be included at actual values to the extent possible and estimates made for others. Registration fees should be set to cover actual and estimated costs only, without a profit markup (for non-profit organizations). There should be no charge for the dissemination of public (Federal Government) information that is otherwise available free of charge.

If HUD or other Federal employees are participating as speakers, panelists, etc., it would be customary to waive any registration fee for the day(s) of participation only, including the cost of the meal(s) provided during their participation, as with the other attendees if included in the registration fee.

- i. Develop and distribute a combined announcement and reply form.

The announcement for the event should be comprehensive and informative, to minimize calls for details, including purpose, subject areas, speakers, a preliminary agenda, location, time, costs, and, if applicable, available hotel accommodations, etc. The announcement should include a form for advance registration and payment of any deposit or

fees for attending. Acknowledge receipt of advance registration and any fees using a form letter to send to respondents.

- j. Confirm that speakers, panelists, trainers, will be ready.

Stay in contact with invited participants to be sure they will have all materials submitted in time for printing, including biographical sketches and other printed matter/handouts for use as resource materials, as needed, to have as part of the registration package provided to attendees. Develop and include a detailed agenda, updated as needed, to include in the package. Arrange for and later confirm that slide projectors, flipcharts, etc. will be available as needed by participants.

- k. Have attendees register at the Conference/Workshop.

Allow time prior to starting the event for attendees to formally register upon arrival at a registration desk/station. Check formal registrations against the advance registration list of respondents to the announcement. This will give a count of how many people are attending and whether there is possibly more than can be accommodated (better to know this as soon as possible than to start the event without adequate seating capacity for attendees). Keep a copy of completed registration forms and related information for your records.

- l. Have attendees complete an evaluation of sessions attended.

Develop an evaluation form that can be used by attendees of the event to obtain feedback on how well the speakers, trainers, etc. have done in meeting stated objectives for a session. It would be best to have attendees complete evaluation forms for each session attended at the end of each session rather than one overall evaluation at the end of the entire event.

- m. Keep good administrative and financial records for the event.

All planning activities and expenditures of funds associated with the event should be made a matter of record. Attendance records should also be compiled for each session by use of attendance sheets. Complete and accurate records, including receipts for expenses, invoices, etc., are

important. If Federal funds are involved, full accountability of expenditures must be detailed with records of bills, payments made, and receipts showing what the Federal funds were used for.

- n. Conduct a post-meeting analysis of the evaluations made by attendees.

An analysis of the evaluations and comments made by attendees is an important step and should be made and documented in summary form. This will give the sponsoring organization(s) an assessment as to the value of the event and may be useful in future planning by the same organization(s) or others the information is shared with.

- o. Comply with applicable Federal requirements for use of Federal funds, e.g., OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Nonprofit organizations using HUD assistance for training conferences or workshops are subject to OMB Circular A-122. These cost principles and specific requirements are fully applicable, including Attachment B - Selected Items of Cost, Paragraphs 5, Communication costs; 8, Contributions; 10 Donations; 12, Entertainment costs; 13, Equipment and other capital expenditures; 29, Participant support costs; 36, Public information service costs; 37, Publication and printing costs; 48, Training and education costs; 49, Transportation costs, and 50, Travel costs.

DON'Ts - IMPERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- p. The conference or workshop must not be devoted to sales of products or services.

Sales of products or services by one or more vendors or suppliers where attendees are only informed about the various products and services available for purchase does not qualify as training. Educational materials prepared for use and utilized as part of an event may be sold to participants only at cost. Also, audio or video recordings may be sold only at cost after the event is concluded.

- q. A conference or workshop must not be limited only to HUD attendees.

The event must not be limited to HUD or Federal employees either as attendees or entirely as speakers. There would need to be other speakers and attendees as well.

- r. A conference or workshop must not be purely social, celebratory, or for political fund raising.

The event may have a social or celebratory component only if the context of the event, as a whole, is educational or instructional. Avoid political fund raising activities as a part of the event.

- s. HUD equipment, supplies, or penalty envelopes must not be used.

However, HUD may furnish equipment and supplies for use by participants of the event for a HUD co-sponsored portion. HUD informational materials dealing with the subject of the event that are available to the public could be made available to all participants. However, materials prepared specifically for the HUD co-sponsored portion of the event would normally be provided only to participants that would be expected to attend the HUD session to minimize HUD's costs.

- t. The registration fees collected must not exceed the costs for the event.

Mandatory registration fees for the event may not be charged unless the sponsor (resident group) is responsible for a substantive portion of the event, and incurs expenses, such as assisting in developing the program or arranging for speakers. For example, if an organization were to completely plan and conduct an event on behalf of a resident group, the resident group may not receive any portion of any registration fees.

The fees collected must not exceed the costs for the event. HUD employees may not be exempt from payment of such fees unless acceptance of any reduced fee complies with the guidelines for travel cost and gifts for attendance at an event not co-sponsored by HUD (to be determined by HUD).

- u. The event should not invite HUD (or other Federal) employees to a VIP suite, provide any complimentary ticket to activities such as an award banquet, special recreational shows, etc.

HUD attendees should not be asked or expected to engage in fund raising or solicitations for donations of any kind to support an event or for the benefit of the sponsor in any way.

- v. Federal participants should not be excessively emphasized in announcing the event.

If there will be Federal employee participation, the announcement for the event should not excessively emphasize their participation and HUD should only be identified if serving as an official co-sponsor of the event.

- w. The event must not include a lobbying activity to influence the Government.

Recipients and subrecipients are prohibited from using Federal funds for lobbying the Federal government in connection with a specific contract, grant, or loan. The event must not involve a lobbying activity where support is solicited by the sponsor to influence the Government, e.g., for favorable consideration of funding from HUD or inclusion of provisions in regulations or legislation proposals by HUD, for the benefit of the sponsor or its constituents.