Hosting the annual APWA Congress and Exposition is a very rewarding experience and can go a long way toward uniting and building your chapter membership. Congress is an international event that is the most visible annual member activity and educational event for APWA. Close to 6,000 attendees and exhibitors participate in the Congress each year.

The following information is designed to give chapters an idea of what it takes to host the Congress. After reviewing this information, we encourage you to talk with your chapter leaders and members about the possibility of submitting an invitation for a future year.

Although there are chapter financial obligations involved with hosting the Congress, every effort is made to work closely with each host chapter to determine their level of financial commitment. By far the most important responsibility of the host chapter is to provide adequate volunteer support, both in the planning stages and for onsite activities during Congress. Approximately 250-350 volunteers are needed to support the education sessions, hospitality, greeters and staff support.

Site Selection

Congress Site Selection is generally conducted four to six years in advance. This gives the chapter leaders involved in the site selection process the opportunity to be involved in the implementation of the Congress should your chapter's recommended city be chosen. The chapter's commitment and support is an important consideration in site selection.

In September of 2011, the APWA Board of Directors approved several changes to the APWA Congress site selection process that will begin with the 2016 Congress. The most significant changes include a geographic rotation schedule, a staff-managed site selection process, agreement to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each host chapter that defines the chapter's and APWA National's responsibilities, and the establishment of five metrics by which the success of the Congress will be evaluated.

The geographic rotation will begin with the 2016 Congress site selection. Congress will rotate among the East, Central and Western Zones of North America and will return to the Central Zone every other year. The rotation process was set and will begin with the 2015 Congress in Phoenix (West Zone). As a result, the 2016 Congress will be held in the Central Zone and the 2017 Congress in the East Zone. Congress will then follow the rotation pattern of Central (2018), West (2019), Central (2020) and then back to the East (2021).

In past years, all interested chapters across North America had the opportunity to bid on hosting Congress each year. With the adoption of a rotation policy, only chapters located in the designated zone will be invited to submit a proposal for consideration. While this limits the number of chapters/cities eligible each year, it reduces the number of chapters and cities that invest significant time and effort in preparing proposals in a highly competitive process when all chapters in the U.S. and Canada are eligible.
For purposes of APWA Congress site selection, North America has been divided into three zones: East, Central and West. These zones have been established based on the number of chapters in each zone, as well as the number of cities in each zone that we believe currently meet the minimum logistical requirements for Congress.

**West**
- Alaska
- Alberta
- Arizona
- British Columbia
- California Central Coast
- Central California
- Hawaii
- Monterey Bay
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- Northern California
- Oregon
- Rocky Mountain
- Sacramento
- San Diego / Imperial Counties
- Silicon Valley
- Southern California
- Utah
- Ventura County
- Washington

**Central**
- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Chicago Metro
- Colorado
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kansas City Metro
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Manitoba
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Ontario
- Saskatchewan
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Wisconsin

**East**
- Atlantic Provinces
- Central Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Maine
- Mid-Atlantic
- New England
- New Jersey
- New York
- New York Metro
- Newfoundland-Labrador
- North Carolina
- Quebec
- South Carolina
- Southeastern Pennsylvania
- Western Pennsylvania

The 2016 Congress site selection process will be open to chapters located in the Central Zone of North America.

**Site Selection Process**
Site selection opens with a communication emailed to presidents and delegates of chapters located within the designated zone asking if their chapter would like to bid to host the Congress. Also included with the letter are the minimum requirements needed for meeting and exhibit space, hotel room requirements, and outline of the primary responsibilities of the host chapter.

It is important to note that all convention facilities, including the convention center and headquarters hotel, must be available for physical inspection at the time of the site selection in order to be eligible for consideration as a part of the proposed Congress package. Also, chapters that are slated to host an upcoming Congress or Snow Conference will not be considered until that scheduled event is completed.

Interested chapters are asked to respond with a “letter of invitation.” Chapters are not required to submit a full proposal. The chapter president simply submits a letter stating that the chapter is interested in hosting Congress and the recommended host city. Chapters may recommend only one city.
Upon receipt of the chapter invitation, APWA staff will contact the convention bureau in the recommended city to confirm that it meets the minimum logistical requirements. If a city does not meet the requirements, it is eliminated from consideration.

Once the convention bureau has confirmed that the city and its facilities have acceptable dates available and the city’s facilities meet APWA’s minimum logistical requirements, APWA staff will send a detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) to the bureau and a questionnaire to the chapter president. The convention bureau will work with the chapter and facilities involved (hotels, convention center, etc.) to complete the proposal and submit it to APWA.

Each city is then evaluated by staff using specific, Board-approved criteria. Based on the comprehensive data submitted by each city and extensive evaluations, the top two or three cities will be “short-listed” and the other cities eliminated from further consideration. Staff will then visit the “short-listed” cities. These site visits will include inspection of the convention center, headquarters hotel and any other facilities included in the bid. Staff will also meet with the chapter host committee members to review the completed chapter questionnaire.

After the site visits, staff will reevaluate the cities and make a recommendation on site selection to APWA’s Executive Director who will present it to the Board of Directors for ratification, generally at the Board’s meeting in the fall at Congress.

Once the Board has confirmed the site, staff will begin work to finalize all contracts with the convention center, hotels and other facilities. Staff will also begin work with the host chapter to finalize and execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between APWA National and the chapter.

**Congress Host Chapter Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

To assure that responsibilities are clear and that planning and implementation of Congress is smooth and productive, host chapters and APWA National will enter into an MOU that clearly defines and documents the role of the chapter and APWA National specific to management, communications and marketing, fundraising, budget and priorities. Details included in the MOU will be unique for each Congress. The goal is to execute the MOU within six months of selecting the Congress site.

**Financial Guidelines – Fundraising and Expenses**

The Host Chapter’s obligations can vary widely since many items are at the chapter’s discretion. Chapters typically set a minimum fundraising goal between $85,000 and $150,000 US. The MOU will include the chapter’s financial goal and specific activities that will be paid for by the chapter. Any funds raised over the predetermined goal will be spent on mutually-agreed-upon activities.

The chapter may engage in various fundraising efforts. Solicitation of sponsorship dollars from local corporations and public agencies are the most popular targets for fundraising. Because APWA must follow tax regulations related to fundraising and sponsorships, staff will work closely with the chapter prior to initiating fundraising efforts on how all financial supporters will be recognized within the structures and restrictions of a 501(C)(3) charitable organization. All chapter fundraising activities related to Congress must be preapproved by APWA National.
Expenses
The chapter is directly responsible for the items noted below. If a dollar amount is shown it is only an approximate number. APWA National staff will work closely with the chapter through the MOU process to confirm the chapter's financial commitment for each activity.

**Host Committee and subcommittee planning meetings ($2,000)**
Speaker Gifts ($3,000 - $5,000)
Speakers receive a small gift in appreciation of their participation in Congress. Plan for 250 – 300 speaker gifts.

**Host Chapter Hospitality Area ($15,000 - $20,000)**
This area typically has comfortable seating, light snacks and beverages, computers/internet service and small local give-a-ways.

**Daily Exhibit Floor Prizes ($1,500 - $3,000)**
Typically five (5) prizes are given out each day the exhibit hall is open (three days).

**Support for Volunteers (cost variable)**
Providing unique shirts and food onsite during Congress (cost variable). Usually 200+ people.

**Marketing the Congress at APWA Meetings in advance of Congress (Cost variable)**
APWA offers complimentary exhibit booth space and furnishings at the previous year's Snow Conference and Congress at no charge to the host chapter. Other costs associated with attending and exhibiting, including travel, hotel, food and give-a-ways, are the chapter’s responsibility. Chapters may also want to attend and/or exhibit at other industry events to promote the upcoming Congress and the city.

**Futures Program ($3,000 - $5,000)**
This is an opportunity to invite students from area engineering colleges and universities to experience Congress and consider a career in public works. It is a one-day educational event focused on local engineering students and includes an educational component, time on the exhibit floor and a technical tour in the afternoon.

**International Reception ($5,000 - $7,000)**
This reception is typically on Monday night and is to honor our international guests.

**Sports (Cost Variable)**
The Host Chapter is responsible for any cost associated with developing and implementing any sporting activities such as a golf outing.

**Welcome Reception for the APWA National Board of Directors (Cost variable)**
This reception is typically held Friday night preceding Congress and gives the chapter an opportunity to meet with the APWA National Board during an informal reception.

**APWA National Board Spouse Tour (Cost variable)**
Historically the Host Chapter has coordinated and hosted a tour or activity for the spouses of the National Board of Directors (up to 17 people) on Saturday preceding Congress. This can be a tour of a unique local destination or other event.
Supplement the National Budget for General Session Speakers (Cost variable)
Our goal is to have the highest quality General Session speakers possible to increase interest and Congress attendance.

Exhibit Opening Entertainment (Cost Variable)
Arrange and fund a local band or group of entertainers to lead Congress attendees from the Opening General Session to the Exhibit Hall.

Supplement the National Budget for the Get Acquainted Party (Cost Variable)
National will fund this opening Congress event. A Host Chapter contribution will add “local flavor” such as destinations, food, music, entertainment, etc. unique to the city or region.

Exhibitor Hospitality Area ($15,000 - $18,000)
This is an area for exhibitors only on the exhibit floor. Expenses include light food and beverages and internet access.

Most chapters also budget for:

Registration Bags ($5,000 - $8,000)
These are given out at registration to each attendee. Many host chapters have successfully sold the registration bags as a sponsorship item. The number of attendee registrants is usually 3,000+. If exhibitors are included the number is closer to 6,000.

Host Committee Organization and Responsibilities
Once the chapter and city have been selected, the chapter forms the Host Committee. The Host Committee chairperson is often a public works official from the host city. It is very important that the chair be someone that has direct access to decision-makers and those that can assign staff to carry out various tasks. The Host Committee also typically includes individuals who chair various subcommittees. The Host Committee will work closely with National staff to support the planning and production of the Congress. In all cases, National staff will be responsible for the Congress and will be responsible for all contracting and final decisions. The Host Chapter will work closely with National in a consulting capacity for local related events and activities.

The following is an abbreviated overview of the Host Committee suggested committee structure. It is not a complete list of all the subcommittees and is intended only as a guide. Each chapter organizes their Host Committee in a way that works best for them to achieve the successful results. Once the chapter and city have been selected, more detailed information will be provided.

Management Committee
This is the principal group charged with the oversight responsibility for the Host Committee and is made up of the chairs of the subcommittees. It is also charged with the responsibility for the financial integrity and reporting of all Host Committee revenue and expenses.

Fundraising Subcommittee
This committee will work closely with APWA staff to initiate and implement the fundraising program designed to achieve the predetermined amount of money.
Volunteers Subcommittee
This committee is charged with recruiting and assigning all onsite volunteers. Approximately 250 to 350 volunteers are needed to be education session monitors, including two volunteers for each education program session to keep attendance, help with seating and crowd control, and to assist staff and speakers. In addition, 30 to 50 volunteers will be needed to prepare the Congress registration bags.

Exhibits Subcommittee
This committee is responsible for securing lists of prospective exhibitors in the regional area and providing these lists to APWA staff. The committee members are also encouraged to make contact with companies to urge their participation as exhibitors.

Get Acquainted Party Subcommittee
Members of this committee work with staff to provide the “local flavor” for the event.

Hospitality Subcommittee
This committee purpose is to plan and staff the Host Chapter’s Hospitality Area during Congress.

Future’s Program Subcommittee
Members of this committee will plan and implement the one-day educational event focused on local engineering students that includes an educational component, time on the exhibit floor and a technical tour in the afternoon.

Promotions Subcommittee
Members of this committee are charged with reaching out to other organizations and associations that have a public works interest to promote Congress, to identify local and regional groups as preferred targets for potential attendance at Congress, and help secure necessary mailing/email lists.

Publicity Subcommittee
This committee will work with staff to provide lists of local and regional media and help with onsite press coverage.

Sports Subcommittee
This committee is charged with organizing and implementing any Congress sports events such as the traditional golf outing.

Workshop Wednesday Technical Tour Subcommittee
This subcommittee’s purpose is to work with staff on developing workshops that include a classroom learning component and a technical demonstration or project.

Conclusion
We encourage you to talk with your chapter leaders and members about the possibility of hosting a future APWA Congress and Exposition. If you have any questions regarding the process or what it takes to host the Congress please feel free to call, email or write:

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