



## **APWA PUBLIC WORKS EXPO (PWX) GUIDE TO HOST CHAPTERS Updated: April 2023**

Contact: Diana Forbes, APWA Director of Meetings, [dforbes@apwa.org](mailto:dforbes@apwa.org), 816-595-5242

Hosting the annual APWA PWX is a very rewarding experience and can go a long way toward uniting and building your chapter membership. PWX is the most visible annual member activity and educational event for APWA. More than 5,000 attendees and exhibitors participate in PWX each year.

The following information is designed to be a guide to chapters interested in hosting PWX. Staff can answer questions as you assess your chapter's interest in hosting.

Chapter support gives each PWX the local flavor to create a memorable experience for attendees. Chapters provide the welcoming spirit that elevates the attendee experience. Hosting a conference is no small chore, but the hope is that chapter members will enjoy camaraderie, create memories, and have fun. This guide is provided to give insight into what it takes to host a conference, but each chapter will put its spin on the experience.

By far the most important responsibility of the host chapter is to provide adequate volunteer support, both in the planning stages and for the implementation of onsite activities during PWX. Approximately 350 volunteers are needed to fill, on average, 700 two–four-hour shifts to support the education sessions, hospitality, greeters, and to provide APWA staff support. Although there are chapter financial obligations involved with hosting PWX, every effort is made to work closely with each host chapter to determine their level of financial commitment.

### **SITE SELECTION**

PWX site selection is conducted five to six years in advance. This gives the chapter leaders involved in the site selection process the opportunity to be involved in the planning and implementation of PWX should your chapter's recommended city be chosen. The chapter's commitment and support are important considerations in site selection.

PWX rotates among the East, Central and Western Zones of North America and will return to the Central Zone every other year. PWX will follow the rotation pattern as follows:

2027 Western Zone  
2028 Central Zone  
2029 Eastern Zone  
2030 Central Zone  
2031 Western Zone

....and so on.

Chapters included in each zone are:

**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, 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 PROCESS

Site selection opens with a notification to the convention bureau in eligible cities within the designated zone. This communication will request date availability and preliminary costs. Once the convention bureau has confirmed that the city and its facilities have acceptable dates available and meet APWA's minimum logistical requirements, chapters in those areas will be notified and asked to determine interest in hosting PWX. If the Chapter is interested in hosting, the chapter president will be asked to respond with a "Letter of Invitation" for further consideration. Chapters are not required to submit a full proposal. The chapter president simply submits a letter stating that the chapter is interested in hosting PWX. At that time, APWA staff will send the bureau a detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) 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.

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 PWX package. Also, chapters and cities slated to host an upcoming PWX or Snow Conference will not be considered until that scheduled event is completed.

Cities are 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 for a site to APWA’s Chief Executive Officer, who will present it to the Board of Directors for approval. Once the Board has confirmed the site, staff will begin 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.

### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**

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

### **FINANCIAL GUIDELINES – Fundraising and Expenses**

The Host Chapter’s obligations can vary widely since many items are at the chapter’s discretion. Historically, Chapters typically set a fundraising goal between \$125,000 and \$180,000 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 is the most popular target 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 PWX must be preapproved by APWA National.

All funds raised specifically for PWX must be spent on PWX.

Chapters may conduct a chapter fundraiser at the same time they are raising funds for PWX. Careful consideration needs to be given in these efforts so that IRS regulations are being followed. APWA Staff are available to help Chapters develop fundraising plans that comply with IRS regulations.

The following list is provided to give Chapters an example of potential costs in hosting PWX. Chapter support does vary depending on additional activities chapters wish to support. The following outline lists activities frequently supported by chapters. Dollar amounts shown are only an average estimate of what chapters typically commit. An ongoing effort is made to reduce the financial burden on chapters, and chapters should be encouraged not to feel obligated to overcommit. Many factors go into determining a site for PWX and chapter financial support is only one of them.

The chapter's financial commitment will be confirmed during the MOU process. Dollar amounts listed below are what is typical.

## **Priorities**

### **Host Committee and Subcommittee Planning Meetings (\$2,000)**

#### **Marketing the PWX at APWA Meetings in Advance of PWX (\$5,000)**

APWA National offers complimentary exhibit booth space and furnishings at the previous year's Snow Conference and PWX at no charge to the Host Chapter. Other costs associated with attending and exhibiting, including travel, hotel, food and giveaways, are the Host Chapter's responsibility. The Host Chapter may also want to attend and/or exhibit at other industry events to promote the upcoming PWX and the city.

#### **Support for Volunteers (\$15,000)**

Primary expense is related to providing unique shirts and hospitality (food and beverage) onsite during PWX, parking expenses if necessary, and any other activities the Host Chapter wishes to provide for volunteers.

#### **Speaker Gifts (\$5,000)**

Speakers (approximately 300 speakers) receive a small gift from the local host chapter in appreciation of their participation in PWX. Some chapters choose to make a donation in the speaker's name to a local charity, while others provide a small gift with a local flavor. Gift certificates are also a popular item.

### **Local Host Chapter Hospitality Area (\$20,000)**

This area typically has comfortable seating, light snacks and beverages, and small local giveaways.

**Supplement the National Budget for the Get Acquainted Party (Chapter portion not to exceed \$35,000/Shared cost with National)**

APWA National will fund the majority of the expenses for the PWX opening Get Acquainted Party. The Host Chapter's contribution is included to add "local flavor" in relation to food and beverage, music and entertainment unique to the city or region, or support rental fees if there is a specific venue the chapter would like to use for this event.

**International Activity (Chapter portion not to exceed \$5,000/Shared cost with National)**

This activity is to welcome and honor international guests. In recent years, this event has been a reception on Monday night. Chapter is requested to offer suggestions on venue and contribute funds to enhance the reception if necessary.

**XPR Program Selection Committee (No Cost to Chapter)**

Recommend a representative from the Local Host Committee/Chapter to serve on the PWX Program Review Committee. Travel costs to planning meeting covered by APWA.

**Workshop Wednesday Subcommittee**

Workshop Wednesday is part of the PWX event and is typically funded with participation fees. The Host Chapter will work with APWA National to plan for and execute these events. Normal transportation costs are included as part of the registration fee for participants. Normal transportation is defined as traveling to and from venues that are not more than 45 minutes of travel time each way from the site of PWX. If the Host Chapter and APWA National plan a tour beyond this customary distance, the Host Chapter will seek sponsorship for the additional cost or pay for it with Chapter resources.

**National Equipment Rodeo (Cost Variable)**

The National Equipment Rodeo is wholly funded by sponsorships from the PWX exhibitor pool (both by financial support and providing equipment) as well as participant registration fees. Initiated in 2017, the scope and cost of the Equipment Rodeo vary from year to year. APWA and Host Chapter will work in conjunction to develop and organize the Equipment Rodeo. Chapter is primarily responsible for technical aspects of competition events at the Rodeo. APWA National handles administrative and logistical planning responsibilities for the event.

**Optional Items**

**Supplement the National Budget for General Session Speakers (Chapter portion not to exceed \$50,000/Shared cost with National)**

APWA budgets for high-quality keynote speakers. In recent years, APWA National's budget has included this expense at 100%. This option should be only be considered if the Host Chapter is interested in a particular keynote speaker that may require a higher fee than what APWA budgets for this activity. Final decisions on keynote speakers lie with APWA.

#### **Attendee Giveaway (\$8,000)**

These are given out at registration to each attendee. Many host chapters have successfully secured a sponsor for the registration bags or padfolios. The number of attendee registrants is usually 3,000+. If exhibitors are included, the number is closer to 5,000.

#### **Daily Exhibit Floor Prizes (\$5,000)**

Typically, five (5) prizes are given out each day the exhibit hall is open (three days).

#### **Futures Program (\$5,000)**

This is an opportunity to invite students from area engineering colleges and universities to experience PWX 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.

#### **Exhibit Opening Entertainment (\$2,000)**

Arrange and fund a local band or group of entertainers to lead PWX attendees from the Opening General Session to the Exhibit Hall.

#### **Exhibitor Hospitality Area (Chapter portion not to exceed \$8,000/Shared cost with National)**

This is an area for exhibitors only on the exhibit floor. Expenses include light food and beverages.

#### ***Most host chapters also budget for:***

**Welcome Reception for the APWA National Board of Directors (Chapter portion not to exceed \$5,000/Shared cost with National)** This reception is typically held Friday night preceding PWX, and gives the Host Chapter an opportunity to meet with the APWA National Board of Directors during an informal reception.

#### **APWA National Board Spouse Tour (\$2,500)**

The Host Chapter may coordinate and host a half-day tour or activity for the spouses of the National Board of Directors (up to 20 people) on Saturday preceding PWX. This can be a tour of a unique local destination or other event.

#### **Sports (\$5,000)**



The Host Chapter is responsible for any cost associated with developing and implementing any sporting activities, such as a golf outing or 5K race/walk.

### **HOST COMMITTEE—Organization and Responsibilities**

Once the chapter and city have been selected, the chapter forms the Local Host Committee. The Local Host Committee chairperson is often a public works official from the host city. The chair must be someone that has direct access to decision-makers and those that can assign staff to carry out various tasks.

The Host Committee also includes individuals who chair various subcommittees. In most cases, Host Committees choose to have two co-chairs for each subcommittee. The Local Host Committee will work closely with National staff to support the planning and implementation of PWX. In all cases, National staff will be responsible for PWX 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 Local 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 Local Host Committee in a way that works best for them to achieve successful results.

### **SUGGESTED SUBCOMMITTEES include the following:**

#### **Management Committee**

This is the principal group charged with the oversight responsibility for the Local 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 Local Host Committee revenue and expenses.

#### **Fundraising Subcommittee**

This committee will work closely with APWA National staff to initiate and implement the fundraising program designed to achieve the predetermined financial goal.

#### **Volunteers Subcommittee**

This committee is charged with recruiting and assigning all onsite volunteers. Approximately 350 volunteers are needed to fill, on average, 700 two–four-hour shifts to support the education sessions, hospitality, greeters, and to provide APWA staff support.

#### **Exhibits Subcommittee**

This committee is responsible for securing lists of prospective exhibitors in the regional area and providing these lists to APWA National staff. The committee members are also encouraged to contact 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 Local Host Chapter’s Hospitality Area during PWX.

### **Futures 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.

### **International Reception Subcommittee**

Members of this committee will work with APWA National staff to plan and implement a reception for all international guests.

### **Promotions Subcommittee**

Members of this committee are charged with reaching out to other organizations and associations that have a public works interest to promote PWX, to identify local and regional groups as preferred targets for potential attendance at PWX, 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.

### **Rodeo Subcommittee**

This committee will work with staff to determine rodeo events and logistics.

### **Sports Subcommittee**

This committee is charged with organizing and implementing any PWX 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 PWX and Exposition. If you have any questions regarding the process or what it takes to host the PWX please feel free to call, email or write:



Diana Forbes, Director of Meetings  
American Public Works Association  
1200 Main St., Ste. 1400  
Kansas City, MO 64105  
Phone: 816-595-5242  
Email: [dforbes@apwa.org](mailto:dforbes@apwa.org)