



CHIEF NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU MANUAL


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DISTRIBUTION: A

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ACTION OFFICER'S GUIDE TO PLANNING CONFERENCES AND EXEMPT EVENTS

References: See Enclosure C.

1. Purpose. This manual describes how to implement the conference planning policy in reference a.
2. Cancellation. None.
3. Applicability. This instruction applies to all National Guard elements.
4. Procedures. See Enclosures A and B.
5. Summary of Changes. This is the first issuance of CNGBM 8100.01.
6. Releasability. This manual is approved for public release; distribution is unlimited. Copies are available through <<http://www.ngbpdc.ngb.army.mil>>.
7. Effective Date. This manual is effective upon publication.


CHARLES G. CARPENTER
Director, Programs and Resources
and Comptroller

Enclosures:

- A --Conference Planning Process
- B – Exempt Event Planning Process
- C -- References

UNCLASSIFIED

GL -- Glossary

ENCLOSURE A

CONFERENCE PLANNING PROCESS

1. Mission. A well-written and well-supported request packet is the key to success. Action Officers (AO) will:
 - a. Plan conferences in accordance with (IAW) references a through e.
 - b. Assemble request packets that document compliance.
 - c. Route the request packet from proponent to approval authority.
 - d. Submit reporting requirements IAW reference a.
2. References.
 - a. AOs will study applicable policy guidance, which includes references a through e.
 - b. AOs will study examples available at the Guard Knowledge Online (GKO) website at reference f.
 - c. AOs will consult protocol officials and legal advisors, as needed and appropriate, to ensure compliance with policy.
3. Obtaining Initial Conference Information. At the start of the planning process, AOs will obtain no less than six required pieces of information from conference proponents.
 - a. Required Information.
 - (1) Justification; including explanation of how less expensive alternatives (for example, teleconferencing) cannot meet the conference's mission.
 - (2) Proposed dates.
 - (3) Conference length, in days.
 - (4) Number of attendees (approximate); including duty statuses.
 - (5) Criteria for individual attendance.
 - (6) Draft agenda; includes speakers and presenters.
 - b. Additional Information.

- (1) Distinguished visitors; including potential participation.
- (2) Co-sponsors.
- (3) Involvement of non-Federal entities.
- (4) Spouse travel.

4. Drafting a Certifying Statement. AOs will use the obtained information to prepare a certifying statement for sponsor signature. Sample statements are available on the GKO website.

a. Certifying statements explain why travel is essential, including how the objectives cannot be met less expensively by means such as correspondence, teleconference, or webinar.

b. Officials at or above the rank or grade of O-6 or GS-15 will sign the certifying statement for the sponsoring activity.

5. Conduct a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA). CBAs verify selected geographic sites and venues as cities and facilities that minimize taxpayer costs while allowing for mission accomplishment. CBAs require a five-step process.

a. Download a CBA Worksheet. Available on the GKO website, templates display the following primary cost drivers:

- (1) Travel costs (for example, airfare).
- (2) Lodging costs.
- (3) Venue costs (for example, audiovisual support).
- (4) Meals and Incidental Expenses.

b. Identify the Best Government Facility. Before considering a commercial facility, an AO will identify the government facility that can best accommodate the conference. A list of Federal facilities is available on the GKO website; this list is not all-inclusive, and AOs are advised to coordinate with the appropriate protocol office familiar with an area's government facilities.

(1) Use of a government facility is not mandatory. However, government facilities are often the lowest cost with lowest risk of adverse public perception.

(2) Generic statements similar to "no government facilities are available or appropriate" are unacceptable. CBAs will include documentation providing specifics on a government facility's unavailability or insufficiency.

c. Compare a Minimum of Three Geographic Sites. AOs will conduct a cost comparison of no less than three geographic sites, including the location of the best government facility. Tools for gathering required data are available on the GKO website.

- (1) Compare per diem expenses.
- (2) Compare travel costs, including local and ground transportation.
- (3) Compare distance from the majority of attendees.
- (4) Compare off-season rates.

d. Research Further Within the Lowest-Cost Geographic Site. AOs will do market research of a minimum of three venues within the lowest-cost geographic site.

(1) When government facilities are located within the geographic site, one of the venues will be the site's best government facility.

(2) AOs will communicate to venue representatives that only market research is being conducted and there is no obligation of government funds.

e. Recommend a Geographic Site and Venue.

(1) AOs will use the data gathered during the CBA process to justify the recommended geographic site and venue.

(2) Selecting a location that is not the lowest-cost option requires prior coordination with the appropriate protocol office.

6. Compose a Request Memorandum. AOs will enter information gathered from the steps in paragraphs 3 and 5 into the memorandum template available on the GKO website.

7. Calculate an Estimate. AOs will use two calculation tools.

- a. The cost estimating calculator at reference g.
- b. The cost estimation table in the CBA template.

8. Complete the Request Packet. AOs will assemble a packet that includes:

- a. Certifying statement.
- b. CBA.

- c. Request memorandum.
- d. Results from the cost estimating calculator at reference g.

9. Route the Request Packet for Approval.

a. Standard Routing Process. The AO will route requests packet for review, dependant on organizational level and IAW policy timelines, to:

- (1) Head of directorate or equivalent.
- (2) Protocol office.
- (3) Legal advisor.
- (4) Any other coordinating offices.
- (5) Approval authority.

b. Excess Costs Escalated Routing Process. When the AO becomes aware that a conference will exceed estimated costs and cross a tier threshold, the AO will submit the request packet to the next-level approval authority. AOs should evaluate the likelihood of needing higher-tier approval authority near the onset of planning (for example, when examining the results of the initial CBA).

10. Enter into a Letter of Intent (LOI). After the approval authority grants the approval, the AO may enter into a LOI with the approved facility.

a. AOs will use the LOI template available on the GKO website.

b. AOs will deviate from this template only after obtaining a written legal opinion allowing for that deviation.

c. AOs will not sign reservation agreements created or provided by facilities. Commercial venues may present documents that include terms the government cannot agree to (such as indemnification clauses). Acting against this guidance may result in unauthorized commitments, personal liability, and fiscal law violations.

11. Complete Reporting Requirements. AOs will complete after action reports (AAR) IAW reference a. The mission is complete once the AAR is submitted.

ENCLOSURE B

EXEMPT EVENT PLANNING PROCESS

1. Mission. For exempt events that require approval, AOs will:
 - a. Compose an Exemption Request Memorandum. The memorandum, signed by the proponent, will justify the request for exemption.
 - b. Route the Request for Legal Review. The memorandum and supporting documentation will be reviewed by organizational level.
 - (1) At the National Guard Bureau (NGB). The Office of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Chief Counsel will review NGB-level requests.
 - (2) In the States. State Judge Advocates will review State-level requests.
 - c. Submit the Request for Approval. Approval authorities will review the requests IAW reference a.
2. Post-Approval. AOs will ensure that exempt events are clearly related to carrying out the National Guard mission, with expenses kept to a minimum and social participation limited to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

ENCLOSURE C

REFERENCES

- a. CNGB Instruction 8100.01, 29 September 2014, “National Guard Conference Policy”
- b. P.L. 113-6, “Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013”
- c. DoD Deputy Chief Management Officer Memorandum, 06 November 2013, “Implementation of Updated Conference Oversight Requirements”
- d. Joint Federal Travel Regulations, Volume 1
- e. Joint Travel Regulations, Volume 2
- f. Conference Policy Portal Guard Knowledge Online
<<https://gkoportal.ng.mil/arng/STAFF/B01/MEC/SitePages/Home.aspx>> 27 June 2014
- g. Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation Cost Guidance Portal
<<https://www.cape.osd.mil/CostGuidance>> 27 June 2014

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Report
AO	Action Officer
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
GKO	Guard Knowledge Online
IAW	In Accordance With
LOI	Letter of Intent
NGB	National Guard Bureau

PART II. DEFINITIONS

Activity -- The sub-organization hosting the conference.

After Action Report -- A report consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data on an event. Required within 20 days after every conference with costs greater than \$20,000.

Approval Authority -- An official who may approve the request.

Conference -- A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. In addition to travel, indicators of a conference often include, but are not limited to: registration fees; a published substantive agenda and scheduled speakers or discussion panels; multi-day agendas; and affiliated social events. Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all of these indicators but will generally meet some of them.

Conference Fee -- The sum of money required by the host of an event for all attendees to be granted permission to participate in the event. This does not include exhibit fees.

Co-sponsored Conference -- An event is considered co-sponsored when a National Guard activity sponsors an event in collaboration with another organization external to the National Guard by developing the substantive aspects of the event or provides substantial logistical support. If the National Guard provides 50 percent or more of the speakers/presenters on the agenda, the event is co-sponsored.

Exhibit Fee - The sum of money required by the host of an event for the National Guard to purchase space, electricity, or other such requirements to display an exhibit, also called booth or display, at the event.

Government Facility -- A venue owned or leased by the U.S. Government (Federal, State, or Local Government), to include the military, or a foreign government.

Host -- The organization that funds the event, all or in part, or is responsible for developing the substantive aspects of the event, or provides substantial logistical support. Also known as “sponsor.”

National Guard Conference -- An event with sufficient indicators of a conference hosted or sponsored by a National Guard activity. The National Guard is considered the host when it plans or funds the event. Generally, most participants will be National Guard personnel and the topic or purpose is specific to the National Guard.

Non-Federal Entity -- An organization external to the U.S. Federal Government. This includes foreign Federal governments, U.S. state and local governments, federally funded research and development centers, and private organizations.

Resource Manager -- An individual that activities consult regarding resource issues, budgeting, and funding. The resource manager may be at varying levels, depending on the organization and structure of a particular directorate.

Venue -- The actual building, campus, or physical setting of the event; not the city and state.