



Professional Development Manual for Communities

The American Public Gardens Association is committed to increasing access to professional development opportunities for the broadest possible diverse member audience. This manual provides tools for Communities to seek authentic, productive, durable projects and participate in knowledge sharing year-round. See [2020-2024 Strategic Plan Goals](#).

Working with the Association, Communities have many opportunities to gauge emerging trends, issues, and gaps in professional development in the public horticulture field, and to respond by creating professional development content that is accessible and meets the needs of all members.

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What Method of Professional Development is the Best for Your Community, Topic and/or Audience?

Virtual Event Types

Town Hall

This is a Community-led open discussion surrounding a topic that runs 60 to 90 minutes. Typically, targeted marketing is to the Community or Specialty, although broader membership marketing is an option. Open for members only. Speakers are secured by the Community and can include corporate and non-members.

Lunch & Learn

This is a short presentation-style format during a lunch hour that works best for our diverse membership, spanning the different time zones. This is a “live” event, meaning there is no pre-recording. Twenty (20) minutes is the allotted time for presenting with 10 minutes for Q&A.

Webinar

This is a formal educational presentation that includes a Q&A portion at the end. Presentations run a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of 120 minutes, with at least 10 minutes for Q&A. Webinars require a small fee for attendance and may be sponsored to provide either a limited number of “scholarship” registration fee waivers or, at a higher sponsored level, free registration for all members.

Consider when related webinars could be packaged as a series. Sponsors and registrants may find more value in participating in a series rather than a single event.

Virtual Workshop

Virtual workshops are live events, unless components need to be pre-recorded, or video played. The workshop is different from a webinar as it is intended to be interactive like a class, with dialogue between attendees and presenter. Usually there is pre-reading or pre-material shared and an attendee list/cap determined. Running time is 2 or more hours, maximum of 8 hours. Virtual workshops require a small fee for attendance and may be sponsored to provide either a limited number of “scholarship” registration fee waivers or, at a higher sponsored level, free registration for all members.

Consider whether several related workshops could be packaged as a series. Sponsors and registrants may find more value in participating in a series rather than a single event.

Virtual Professional Development Symposia

Virtual symposia are multiple-day programs of educational content which may include interactive participation by attendees. Half-day blocks of 4 hours recommended; virtual symposia must be a minimum of two ½ day blocks and preferably within the same week. An additional ½ day of content may be added and registration pricing adjusted accordingly. Symposia require a fee for attendance and may be sponsored to support budgetary goals and to provide scholarship registration fee offsets.

**This event type will be detailed in an addendum to this document in early 2021.*

In-person Learning Event Types

In-Person Professional Development Symposia are face-to-face collaborations with host gardens providing professionals in similar fields the opportunity to effectively network, share ideas, visit gardens and local sites, and discuss challenges and successes. Topic-specific training and educational opportunities make symposia attractive professional development opportunities. Symposia require a fee for attendance and sponsors should be sought to support budgetary goals and to provide scholarship registration fee offsets.

**The existing Symposia Handbook may still be used for planning in-person Symposia; however there will new guidelines in early 2021 to help in determining whether to select virtual or in-person options.*

In-person Workshops at Association Annual Conference

Annual Conference workshops have the potential to reach many people for professional development across multiple disciplines. Look to the annual Call for Sessions & Content for descriptions of full-day and half-day options. A budget must be submitted with every full-day workshop submission. Workshops require a fee for attendance and may be sponsored to offset or cover costs.

In-person Concurrent Sessions at Annual Conference

Concurrent sessions have the potential to reach many people across multiple disciplines. Look to our annual Call for Sessions & Content each July for descriptions of the 60 or 90-minute panel options.

Non Event-Based Professional Development

Article in *Public Garden Magazine*

Could your message be conveyed through an article submission to *Public Garden*, our informative, professional, industry magazine that reaches Association members and other subscribers? *Public Garden* is published quarterly and has specific guidelines for editorial content, both in print and online. For up-to-date editorial guidelines and deadlines, please visit the Publications section of the Association website, publicgardens.org.

Annual Projects

Communities may decide to engage in the creation of resources including documents, roadmaps, reports or other products of professional value as annual projects. Additionally, a Community may choose to partner with Association staff to contribute to or promote initiatives that are strategic to the Association and align with Community goals.

Designing Event-Based Professional Development Events

1. Build consensus within a group of Community members on what topic and event type the group would like to pursue. Include Community Leadership and your Staff Liaison from the very beginning of planning.
2. Utilize *Tools for Creating Excellent Presentations* (in this document).
3. Plans should be transparent to all Community members by posting an invitation to join a planning group on the discussion platform.
4. Review the specific event descriptions and associated planning steps to determine appropriate timelines. Included in this document and on publicgardens.org: <https://www.publicgardens.org/professional-development/events/event-content-guidelines>
5. Your Staff Liaison will be responsible for gaining internal approval for events and confirming calendar availability. Your Staff Liaison will assist you in scheduling a Town Hall. For all other event types, your Staff Liaison will provide you with a link to submit a brief event description.

Event Information for Submission

Event Type

Title

Brief description of proposed event/learning outcomes

Sponsor or an idea for a potential sponsor has been identified (N/A if none)

Any supplemental information; trending or innovative topic/diverse perspectives/new or special audience

Proposed event dates

Community initiating this event

Presenter information

Timelines and Deadlines for Events Planning

Communities may suggest content on an ongoing, rolling basis. However, planning timelines require lead time for the Association to support your event.

The deadlines will be advertised throughout the year to assist you in meeting planning timelines. Content scheduling deadlines fall one week after COC quarterly calls and allow reminder of upcoming scheduling deadline during call.

Annual Conference

Call for Sessions & Content advertised August-October for Annual Conference event the following June.

Deadline: Last Wednesday in October

Virtual Events

Deadline: Third Friday in November

Last day to submit for virtual events in January-February

Deadline: Last Friday in January

Last day to submit for virtual events in March- May

Deadline: Last Friday in April

Last day to submit for virtual events in August- October

Deadline: Last Friday in August

Last day to submit for virtual events in November-December

Symposia

Virtual Symposia planning should begin 8-12 months in advance

In-person Symposia planning should begin a minimum of 18 months in advance

Association Virtual Event Staff Support

Your Staff Liaison will work with presenters to plan and achieve the highest possible quality virtual event. Staff may support event planning in the following ways:

- Communicating with presenters, coordinating speaker availability, and collecting content as needed.
- Supporting sponsorship opportunities
- Pursuing CEU (Continuing Education Credits) when content and program length meet requirements
- Determining if an advance Practice Session is required or if usual 30-minute pre-Event window is sufficient
- Posting the upcoming event to the Upcoming Event Section of the Community Forum
- Two Association staff will attend and support day of events
- Posting (or coordinating with Community members to post) a discussion thread about the Event to the Community Forum
- Collect any resources after the event that should be included in the Library and Media Center

Speaker Discounts and Waivers

Do presenters at virtual events receive complimentary registration?

Presenters for Webinars and Workshops receive complimentary registrations. Those presenting for 30 or more minutes at a Symposium receive complimentary registration.

Will presenters need to sign or confirm that they have read policies about content ownership?

Yes, this step must be complete at the time of scheduling. See agreement language below.

Do chairs/vice chairs go to virtual events created by their Community for free?

Yes, the Association will provide a complimentary registration code.

Permissions and Code of Conduct Waivers

In checking the box at the bottom of this page, I agree to adhere to the following:

As a presenter for an American Public Gardens Association Event,

I represent and warrant that my presentations do not knowingly violate any proprietary or personal rights of others (e.g. copyright, trademark and privacy rights), and contains nothing offensive, defamatory, or unlawful. I have the full authority to enter into this agreement and have obtained all necessary permissions or licenses from any individuals or organizations whose material is included or used in my presentation.

I grant to the American Public Gardens Association a royalty-free license to record and distribute my presentation (including video, accompanying documents, and PowerPoint presentations) as part of its current and subsequently archived offerings, with appropriate attribution to me as its creator. I also acknowledge that I retain copyright ownership of the content of my presentation, and that the grant of this license does not prohibit me from using my presentation in any way or from allowing others to use it.

I also authorize the Association to use my name, likeness, photograph, and biographical data in connection with the use and promotion of the program.

I agree to notify the Association staff immediately if an emergency prevents me from meeting my obligations as a speaker.

I will use any incentives (e.g. registration waiver code(s), etc.) that I receive in consideration of my presentation solely for myself and will not share them unless the Association grants written consent for me to do so.

During my presentation(s)

I will not engage in any type of promotional marketing or selling of any product or service unless the Association has consented to this as part of my presentation.

I will not disparage the American Public Gardens Association in any way, whether online or in person.

I will “PRE-pare” my presentation to help keep it Professional (hard on the facts, but not on people), Respectful (see our IDEA policy statement), and Excellent (representative of the highest quality expected from our members).

I have read the Code of Conduct below and agree to act in accordance with these codes.

The American Public Gardens Association is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience at all Association events. We seek to provide an environment in which diverse attendees learn, network, and enjoy the company of other attendees in a professional environment. The Association does not tolerate harassment in any form. Discriminatory language, behavior, or imagery that renders discomfort in others is not appropriate. Those who violate these standards risk being immediately barred from further event participation or referred to appropriate authorities.

I hereby understand and agree to the above conditions as listed.

The planning group should review the following expectations for all Association hosted professional development events, to be sure methods are in keeping with:

- (IDEA) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Accessibility principles and practices
- Planning Your Presentation
- Rubric for Program Excellence
- Obtaining Continuing Education Credits
- Event Type Descriptions for Communities

(IDEA) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Accessibility principles and practices

Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

The American Public Gardens Association is committed to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture where the contributions of all community members are valued, respected and appreciated. The Association also seeks to encourage and support its members in creating this same culture within their own institutions.

Just as the gardens and landscapes we present are biologically diverse and engaging, we seek to consistently re-examine our professional values, modify our existing practices and remove barriers to being diverse and inclusive.

Accessibility

The Association is committed to making all professional development content accessible for all.

Advice on preparing and Delivering Accessible and Inclusive Presentations

Please always be an accessibility/inclusion advocate whether you are a presenter or a session organizer/moderator.

- Be aware
- Be intentional
- Be flexible/adaptable

Planning Your Presentation

Virtual Presentation:

- If slides are used in the presentation, they should be made available for attendees.
- On each slide, balance text and images.
- Keep text between 32 and 36-point font
- Always have high contrast between colors (e.g. background and text)
- Avoid 'busy' slide backgrounds
- For maps, charts, and graph labels use 20-point or larger font. Include the description of the image, chart, or graph.
- Consider adding alternative text to charts, graphics, or photos for the same reason above.
- If your presentation includes a video, it should be captioned.

Live auto-captioning will run during all events and be recorded. A transcript will be available after the event and will be available alongside the recording.

In-Person Presentation:

- Speakers/presenters should ALWAYS use the microphone. Never assume that everyone can hear you even when projecting.
- Engage your audience and do not ask/expect them to read the slide.
- Briefly describe any slide images for those that may be seated in the back or who may have low vision or be blind ([Guidelines for Verbal Descriptions](#)).
- The Association will let you know if a session attendee will use assisted listening technology. If so, a volunteer will familiarize you with this technology.
- The Association will inform you if there will be an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for your session. Be mindful of working effectively with interpreters ([Working with Interpreters](#)).
- If needed, the Association will ensure accessible seating (e.g., space) closer to the front of the presentation space.

- If slides are used in the presentation, they should be made available for attendees. Include your notes into the power point slides or presentation. This

will allow those who view the presentation at a later date to understand your message.

- On each slide, balance text and images.
- Keep text between 32 and 36-point font
- Always have high contrast between colors (e.g. background and text)
- Avoid 'busy' slide backgrounds
- For maps, charts, and graph labels use 20-point or larger font. Include the description of the image, chart, or graph.
- Consider adding alternative text to charts, graphics, or photos for the same reason above.
- If your presentation includes a video, it should be captioned.

For any other questions regarding accessibility and accommodations in advance of events, email trosenbluth@publicgardens.org

The following rubric topics represent traits of the highest presentation quality. Community leadership and presenters are asked to apply these standards when creating any professional development programming for member audiences.

Purpose: Topic, intent, and learning outcomes are focused, well presented, and thoughtfully articulated

Presenter Rationale: Rationale for choosing presenters is focused, well presented, and thoughtfully articulated

Relevance: Topic and presenters represent a wide range of perspectives, regions, and garden sizes/budgets/mission

Audience Engagement: The most appropriate in-person audience engagement format is identified to allow full exploration of the topic

Virtual Engagement: The most appropriate virtual session structure is identified to deliver content in an accessible and engaging way

Impact: Topic is trending, important and timely, highly relevant to the intended audience, and has strong potential to catalyze audience

Obtaining Continuing Education Credits

Many Association events may qualify for Continuing Education Credits (CEUs). As soon as your event is approved and scheduled, consider whether you want to offer CEUs (if Symposium this could be for one, a few, or all sessions).

If content is at least 30 minutes (not including Q&A) it may qualify for CEUs from one of our three partners. Your Staff liaison can pursue credits if you meet the below content expectations.

Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System | LA CES™ - ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects)

Example topics that likely qualify for LACES credit:

- Design of environmental systems
- Horticulture
- Irrigation methods
- Land planning and land use analysis
- Landscape preservation, landscape restoration and adaptive reuse
- Natural hazards - impact of earthquake, hurricane, fire, or flood related to site design
- Planting design
- Resource conservation and management
- Site accessibility, including Americans with Disabilities Act standards for accessible site design
- Site and soils analysis
- Storm water management, surface and subsoil drainage
- Sustainable design, including techniques related to energy efficiency
- Use of site materials and methods of site construction

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)

Pay close attention to whether speaker(s) are/is from USFS or an Arboretum and speaking on some aspect of forest management and tree care. Example topics that likely qualify for ISA credit:

- Pests & Diseases
- Urban Forestry
- Historic Landscape Management/Legacy Trees
- Tree Inventory & Assessment - Risk Management
- Tree and Natural Resource Mapping
- Tree Management Plans/EAB Plans
- Specification/Ordinance Writing and Development
- In-depth Tree Safety Inspection and Tree Diagnostics
- Tree Protection during Construction/Development
- Tree Valuation, Cost Estimation and Planning
- Soil Testing

CFRE International - Certified Fund Raising Executive

Fund-raising related presentations of 30 minutes or more, whether leadership-based or tools and techniques, are eligible for CFRE continuing education hours.

Virtual Event Descriptions and Planning Steps

LUNCH & LEARN

This is a short presentation style format during a lunch hour that works best for our diverse membership, spanning the different time zones. This is a “Live” event meaning there is no pre-recording. 20-minutes is the allotted time for presenting with 10-minutes for Q&A.

How long is this event?

Lunch and Learn is a 30-minute event consisting of a 20-minute presentation period followed by a 10-minute Q&A session.

How often does this event occur?

Lunch & Learns occur on the first Wednesday of every month at 10 am PT/1 pm ET.

Who attends this event? How many people can attend?

Only members may attend. Any number of members may attend.

Will the event be available on-demand following the ‘event’?

Lunch & Learns are available to members in the Resource Center. Please allow 48-72 hours after for recording to become available.

How much does the event cost for attendees?

FREE and available to members only.

Interested in presenting a Lunch and Learn?

Contact your Community staff liaison with ideas for a Lunch & Learn 4-12 weeks in advance.

Speakers must be fully secured and confirmed, and description of content submitted to staff liaison at least 4 weeks before the event.

The event registration will be set up and will be announced in a Specialty eblast and/or newsletter in the month before the event.

Two Association staff and all presenters will begin the event and test run in the 30 minutes before the live event.

WEBINARS

This is a formal educational presentation that includes a Q&A portion at the end. Formal portions of the presentation may be prerecorded to ensure quality. They may be sponsored to provide either a limited number of "scholarship" registration fee waivers or, at a qualifying rate, fully underwrite the webinar at no cost to Members.

Webinars may include experts who are corporate members or outside membership but speakers MAY NOT 'pitch product, service, or item' during presentation and will not receive corporate webinar perks.

How long is this event?

Webinars are 60-120-minute event consisting of at least a 45-minute presentation period followed by at least a 10-minute Q&A session

How often does this event occur?

Webinars take place on Wednesdays. Mid-day timing across time zones are preferred (1PM ET, 12PM CT, 11AM MT, 10AM PT). They may be scheduled in any month but will not be scheduled during conflicting previously scheduled professional development events. Webinars in June will be limited due to the Annual Conference.

Who attends this event? How many people can attend?

Members and non-members may attend. Any number of people can attend up to Zoom cap.

What technology will be used to produce the event?

The Association's Zoom platform will be utilized for all webinar presentations. Q&A function available during webinar can be answered during presentation and/or during Q&A period(s), no live questions will be taken from attendees.

Live presentations are preferred. Pre-recording can be available for formal content portions.

Interested in presenting a Webinar?

Contact your Community staff liaison with ideas for a Webinar 8-12 weeks in advance.

Speakers must be fully secured and confirmed, and description of content submitted to staff liaison at least 6-8 weeks before the event.

All speakers and presenters must commit to being available for a Wednesday presentation.

The event registration will be set up and will be announced by Association Staff.

If live, a test-run can be scheduled within 1 week of event, back-up plans must be made for the event of someone's connection being lost

*If pre-recoding, recording must be finalized at least 2 weeks in advance

WORKSHOPS

The workshop is different from a webinar as it is intended to be interactive like a class, with dialogue between attendees and presenter. Usually there is pre-reading or pre-material shared and an attendee list / a cap determined. 2+ hours, max 8 hours, virtual workshops require a small fee for attendance. They may be sponsored to provide either a limited number of "scholarship" registration fee waivers or, at a qualifying rate, fully underwrite the webinar at no cost to Members. Considered a live event, unless components need to be pre-recorded, or video played.

How long is this event?

2+ hours, max 8 hours

Who attends this event? How many people can attend?

Members or non-members may attend. A cap between 25 to 75 ppl is determined based on presenter preference and presentation style.

Will the event be available on-demand following the 'event'?

Please allow 48-72 hours after for recording to become available.

What technology will be used to produce the event?

Zoom Meeting is used in order to facilitate interaction between presenters and attendees. Break-out rooms may be requested.

Interested in presenting a workshop?

Contact your Community staff liaison with ideas for a webinar 8-12 weeks in advance.

Speakers should be secured when submitting proposal

Registration information (including cap requirement and pre-readings) to Association Staff at least 5 weeks in advance

Registration and marketing of the event will be provided by Association staff

If live, a test-run can be scheduled within 1 week of event, back-up plans must be made in the event of someone's connection being lost

*If pre-recording, must be pre-recorded minimum 2 weeks before event

Presentation and any support materials should be received at least 24-48 hours prior

Presenter and Staff should be on Zoom 30 min prior to the workshop start to test audio and visual