Process and Guidelines for Production of a Webinar

A webinar is a relatively new approach that allows a presentation to be delivered and attended entirely over the web. Using a webinar as a professional development tool is a collaborative process between your NCSL Staff Section Liaison and the Staff Section Executive Committee or Program Committee. Working closely together and following concrete guidelines, a successful webinar can reach many non-traditional attendees and is a cost effective way to communicate, particularly in times when travelling is restricted and budgets are limited.

Once you decide to use a webinar for your professional development, paying attention to critical details will help to ensure its success.

Things to consider when planning a webinar:

a. What type of speaker will you be using? Although webinars are live, some webinar mediums only allow PPT, so the audience will not "see" the speaker. There may be instances where video/graphics can be included, but NCSL staff will have to determine when those services are available. Also, determine if you will have a single presenter, an "interview" type discussion, or a moderated panel discussion. There are pros and cons for each and thought should be given to what would be more attractive to your target audience and the topic being discussed

b. Does the speaker need to be in Denver or are they comfortable giving their presentation over the phone? Most presenters are remote, but there have been instances when the presenter came to the NCSL office to make their presentation.

c. How much time will the presenter need? People can only sit in front of a computer screen for a limited time. (CLE sessions need to be 60 minutes or more in order to get credit.) A typical webinar is 60 minutes or less. A sample format for a one-hour web event could be:

   5 min. Welcome, logistics, introductions

   40-45 min. Presentation

   10-15 min. Q & A with moderator and presenter

5 min. Wrap-up

d. Will the topic be of value *after* the live presentation? Although recording a webinar is a fairly minimal additional cost, some topics may not be useful 6 months or a year later.

e. How much will the webinar cost? Costs depend on the size of the Webinar and the service provider. NCSL uses two service providers, Infinite and Webex. Infinite is the most cost effective up to about 200 connections. Webex is more cost effective above 225 connections. (Estimated connection costs are listed below. Actual costs may vary.) If there are any faculty costs, those must be included in the webinar cost estimate and pre-approved by the staff section executive committee. These cost estimates do not reflect NCSL staff time or long-distance phone calls. The table below is an illustration only and costs listed are approximate.

Infinite Flat $150 fee for the "use of the room, plus $150 archived copy fee, plus $0.14/minute/line, plus tax			
Lines	**USF Tax**	**Total Cost**	**Cost Per Line**
10	61.24	$415.24	**$41.52**
50	119.4	$809.37	$16.19
100	192	$1,302.03	$13.02
200	337.4	$2,287.35	$11.44
225	373.7	$2,533.68	**$11.26**
300	482.7	$3,272.67	$10.91

Webex Flat fee **$2,395** for 60 minutes - Maximum of 500 lines	
Lines	**Cost Per Line**
10	**$239.50**
50	$47.90
100	$23.95
200	$11.98
225	**$10.64**
500	$4.79

f. How many connections will be needed for the webinar? If the projected audience for the topic is small, would a conference call be a more cost effective approach?

g. Will the webinar qualify for continuing legal education (CLE) or other continuing education credit? Does the staff section wish to pursue continuing education credit? If so, the staff section will be responsible for covering costs of pre-application to CLE boards in some states. (Many states will allow attorneys to self-apply, however a few states require pre-application and fees be submitted by the webinar host.)

Process for Production of a Webinar

Producing a webinar takes a great deal of planning and the process should start several weeks before the event date. Staff sections should work closely with the NCSL staff, which will provide the necessary logistical and technical support.

Staff Section Liaison (Staff time estimate – 40 hours or more (depends on faculty needs and registrant questions.)

- Sets up meeting of staff section program committee to discuss potential webinar topics. Program committee (or executive committee) chooses topic, speaker, and date. Staff section liaison sets up any additional meetings with staff section executive committee to authorize expenditure. Keeps staff section officers informed.
- Creates webpage for the webinar and links to online registration. Markets webinar on listserv. This should occur 4-6 weeks prior to the event.
- Communicates with registrants regarding questions and provides any handouts required.
- Arranges for other NCSL staff to assist with webinar logistics on day of webinar. (1-2 people field calls and troubleshoot any connection problems. 1-2 people sit in webinar to track group log-ins, answer questions from participants during webinar and track "chat" for the presenter.) (Extra staffing is only required for very large webinars.)
- If webinar will be evaluated, builds and tests online evaluation instrument for deployment on the day of the webinar. Monitors evaluations and submits report to staff section on webinar.

Faculty/Moderator Prep.

- Staff section liaison communicates with faculty and negotiates fees. Also works with faculty on preparation of presentation and handouts prior to webinar.

- Faculty (including moderator) and NCSL staff who will be assisting, meet for the dry run and the webinar. (In most cases, they do not need to meet in person.) This is the opportunity to make sure the slides are loaded correctly and all the equipment is working. It also allows you to know if you need to shorten the presentation if it is too long to hold people's attention.

- Send PPT to Communications.

Meeting Logistics (Staff time estimate – 20 hours)

- Liaison meets with Communications staff to schedule webinar date and date for a "dry-run." (Note: Communications and Registration departments need at least one week in order to set up online registration for webinars. Marketing for webinars requires 14-30 days notice in order to prepare any marketing materials or e-mails. E-mails are sent out to prospective registrants 2-4 weeks prior to webinars.)

- Communications staff schedules the webinar and dry run. (Note: During registration period, the Staff Section liaison answers all substantive questions regarding webinar and refers technical questions to Communications staff and registration questions to Registration staff.)

- Communications staff set up training room and connection with webinar provider. Liaison and other staff track substantive questions and chat throughout webinar. (Large webinars only)

- Communications staff loads presentation onto webinar server.

- Communications staff and staff from liaison's department troubleshoot any user connection problems.

- Faculty and NCSL staff debrief about the process.

- Staff section liaison sends online evaluation instrument to all attendees of webinar. (Not typical of most webinars)

- Communications staff obtain attendance report (who logged-in and for how long); and online copy of recorded webinar.

- Communications staff reviews billing statement and send to liaison for final approval.

Registration (Staff time estimate – 30 minutes for setup plus 2 minutes per connection)

- Registration staff sets up online registration; interface between NCSL registration and webinar provider; determines registration cut-off and accounting code; creates registration confirmation email.

- Registration staff reviews daily online registrations and uploads to system; tracks number of registrants and keeps liaison informed when number gets close to maximum.

Marketing (Staff time estimate – 4 hours)

- Communications staff may create an e-mail flyer for the webinar or other marketing as needed. This flyer will be distributed via the staff section(s) listserv and can be placed on the staff section(s) websites.

- Maintains webinar page.

CLE and other continuing education credit (Staff time estimate – varies depending on the number of states pre-applying. There may also be additional costs associated with CLE applications.)

- Staff section liaison submits request for preparation of CLE sign-in sheets and pre-applications where required (if applicable).

- LIS staff prepares CLE sign-in sheets, pre-applies for CLE in required states, and creates blank CLE certificate of attendance.

- Staff section liaison keeps track of people who will act as group coordinators in their states (They may also act as proctor for CLE participants).

- Staff section liaison sends handouts to registrants and CLE sign-in sheets and instructions to group coordinators at least 48 hours in advance.

- Staff section liaison determines who attended webinar as direct connections (cross-check electronic record against registrations) and gathers sign-in sheets from group coordinators. Liaison prepares individual CLE certificates of attendance for each attendee as PDFs and e-mails them. Staff Section liaison also creates general certificates of attendance for auditors, where needed.

Sample timeline to consider when planning a webinar* - A webinar can takes as much time to plan as would any “in-person” conference event and should be treated the same. Planning ahead and giving yourself enough time to successfully promote the event can make all the difference in how it is received by the attendees.

• Develop topic and assess interest	6-8 weeks prior
• Finalize topic, title, abstract and speaker(s)	6 weeks prior
• Create webpage for webinar and links to online registration	4-6 weeks prior
• Begin promotion	4-6 weeks prior
• Send email invite via listserv	2 -4 weeks prior
• Meet with speaker(s), moderator and others for dry-run	1 week prior
• Receive final version of slide presentation	2-3 days prior
• Send handouts to registrants	2-3 days prior
• Send reminder e-mail #1	24 hours prior
• Send reminder e-mail #2	2-3 hours prior
• Have a pre-conference with moderator and speaker(s)	30 minutes prior
• Send follow-up e-mail with survey (if applicable)	Within 24 hours after

*Sample timeline provided by American Marketing Association “Tips and Templates for Successful Web Events”