

- ❖ **FIRST THING: Create a “to do” list for the entire planning process. Much of that list will be based on answers to the questions in each section of this protocol and the planning tasklist that follows.**

- ❖ **Time of Conference**
 - Determine the days and dates of the conference.
 - Determine the daily schedule of the conference.
 - What are the session time periods?
 - When are the general sessions on each day?
 - Determine what day will be your “target” event day? (i.e., if you want to center your activities on one day for those professional and paraprofessional librarians who cannot stay overnight, what day will that be during the conference?)

- ❖ **Location of Conference**
 - Where is the conference to be held?
 - Gather as much material as you think would be helpful for the conference location (perhaps for the speaker packets; see later section on “conference speakers”)
 - Maps
 - Restaurants and other surrounding area information
 - Airports
 - Hotels
 - Ground transportation
 - Is there a conference hotel?
 - Is the conference to be held in a hotel, and what other hotels are near the conference events?

- ❖ **NCLA Conference Planning Committee**
 - Has the committee posted its conference web page? If so, bookmark that page! You will consult it often for names, dates, deadlines, requirements.
 - Who are the planning committee members?
 - What are the planning subcommittees?
 - Who are the chairs of those subcommittees?
 - Put together a complete folder of their contact information and their areas of responsibility.
 - Establish contact with the relevant members for your planning purposes.
 - Local arrangements (for hotel reservations)
 - Food event contact
 - Equipment/Technical Support Person
 - Publicity/Programming
 - You might consider sending out an “ice breaking” email stating who you are, what organization you represent and that you will need to be included in the loop of information coming from them.
 - For any correspondence between you and the conference committee members, keep paper records. This will assist all planners involved!
 - Confirm, confirm, confirm. You might think you are becoming annoying in doing this, but the operation grows to such a large size, requests may get misplaced, and you may end up without essential equipment, food, space, etc.

❖ **Conference Theme**

- What is the conference theme?
 - Is there a slogan associated with it?
 - Is there a logo associated with it?
 - What are the expectations/regulations for your programming and this theme?
- Who is the contact regarding the theme and its use?
- How will you incorporate the theme/logo into your advertisement?
 - It may not be necessary to use the conference theme or logo, but it could give you a design starting point for your advertising, etc.
 - It may also cut your costs a little because NCLA will have marketing materials with the logo and theme on them.

❖ **NCLPA's Presence At The Conference**

- How many programs do you want to sponsor?
- Do you want to co-sponsor any sessions?
- What day(s) would be the best for your programming?
- Submit your program timeslot forms as soon as possible to make sure you get the space you need. Since you have already identified the NCLA planning committee chair responsible for compiling these requests, you will know who gets the paperwork.
 - Make sure you give a clear room setup request—theatre style for 50 with a podium, microphone, projector, screen and water pitcher for the speaker, for example. You may be completely guessing and speculating at this point, but still try to be specific in your requests.
 - Keep a copy of each equipment and room setup request in case there are questions during the conference.
- Will there be a meal event?
 - What will be the theme of the meal event:
 - Speaker/entertainment?
 - Business meeting?
 - Social gathering with background music?
 - If the event is to be the NCLPA business luncheon, think about:
 - ◆ Scholarship award ceremony
 - Certificate for winner
 - ◆ Agenda for the meeting
 - ◆ Activities and supporting materials (in 2003, we offered door prizes of baskets made with products from different parts of North Carolina)
 - Supporting materials included slips for name drawing, for example, or you may want to collect attendees' lunch tickets as the slips you draw.
 - What type of meal will you be offering?
 - Who has menus from which you can choose entrees?
 - Get menu selections to appropriate conference committee members.
 - Determine how much you will need to charge for the meal per person.
 - ◆ Will you need to cover the costs of a lunch speaker?
 - ◆ Will you need to cover the costs of meeting materials?
 - ◆ Do you want to raise money for other workshop purposes?
 - ◆ What are the other sections charging for their meal events?
 - Get charges for the meal in place with the NCLA conference planning committee by established deadlines. This information will be ultimately be advertised on the conference website and in the print conference program.

❖ Speaker(s) For NCLPA Programming

- Who will your speaker(s) be?
- Who will be responsible for contacting the speaker(s) and making the arrangements?
 - Write/email potential speakers, explaining the conference goals and the desired programming for NCLPA. If they accept:
 - Write them a confirming and “thank you” letter for their acceptance.
 - Assure them that you will be in contact with them regularly as you plan for their presentation.
 - Determine if there is an assistant that you should be working with on the speaker’s travel, lodging, expenses payment, and possible honorarium. Get that contact information, and handle everything in writing.
 - Once the “deal” has been confirmed, fill out a contract agreement (even if they are not to be paid for their work), have the speaker sign the agreement, and send this to the NCLA office. NCLA must have this on file for each speaker, especially the ones being paid for their services.
 - Contract agreements are available on the NCLA website and on the specific conference website. Caroline Walters in the NCLA office is also a contact for these forms.
 - Will your speakers need lodging/transportation?
 - When will they arrive/depart?
 - Who will provide transportation to/from the airport, if necessary?
 - Stay in close touch with the speaker or assistant to finalize all of the travel schedule and lodging plans. This will help you in arranging ground transportation, etc.
- Will your speaker(s) be making his/her own arrangements or will you make the arrangements for him/her?
 - Our default position is to make the arrangements for the speaker and pay directly either from the project grant or section funds. To do this, we usually go through the NCLA office’s central form. They will make the blanket reservations for everyone submitting a request. During the 2003 conference, this form was made available a little late, so the NCLPA made its reservations directly and specified that they were for the conference. Let Caroline Walters know you’ve made the arrangements directly, and she will inform the hotel that NCLA should receive the bill directly.
 - If speaker(s) pays his/her own expenses and bills NCLPA for that, make sure they have a reimbursement form to summarize expenses, and make sure they submit original receipts. It helps to put the reimbursement form in the speaker packets you distribute about 3 weeks before the conference.
 - **Note:** Plan for a turnaround time for reimbursements of approximately 3 to 4 weeks after the conference, given possible out of office time for the NCLA office assistant and the NCLA treasurer.
 - Will the speaker(s) charge a fee and expenses?
 - Can your budget afford this?
 - Are there other sources of income to pay for these charges?
 - Will there be an honorarium?
 - Would a co-sponsor help in meeting the budget?
- What will your speaker(s) talk about?
- What equipment, if any, will your speaker(s) need?
 - Determine what equipment the conference venue offers and what the cost of that equipment will be. During the 2003 conference, equipment charges were stated early on and changed (increased) as the conference drew near. If the committee does not

have the answers when you initially ask the pricing and availability question, you will have alerted them to the need for this information.

- If the conference venue does not offer the equipment you need, try to arrange for that equipment with the NCLA conference planning committee. Many libraries have presentation equipment and other supplies that they will loan for free or a nominal fee.
- You will submit a preliminary equipment request when you submit forms requesting rooms for your sessions, but you may not know at that time what equipment will be necessary. Make sure to go back to the appropriate conference committee member to request more or less equipment when you find out what your needs will be. They are receptive to later changes as long as it is not within a day or so of the conference.
- Prepare and send speaker packets with relevant conference, travel, lodging and other material. This should be completed about 2-3 weeks prior to the conference. This is a good place to put reimbursement checklists and other post conference forms as well as confirming program details and itinerary receipts for arrangements you have made (airline e-tickets, hotel confirmation numbers and forms, etc). It is a good idea to send the packets “return/receipt” or “certified” mail. That way, you receive notification that the speaker has received the materials.
- Will you want to offer speaker(s) a gift?
 - What will the budget need to be for this?
 - Who will be the manager/”go to” person for this part of the planning?
 - In 2003, we gave North Carolina theme gifts, including Krispy Kreme coupons, Texas Pete hot sauce, Garner’s Jelly products, etc.
- Each speaker will need to be “registered” for the conference. That is, a form needs to be turned in for them even if they will only be attending the session in which they are speaking. This will ensure that they get a registration packet and nametag upon their arrival at the conference venue. Put a note at the bottom of each form explaining whether or not the speaker will attend any more of the conference than his/her session. Without this note, you run the risk of being errantly charged the entire conference fee for the speaker.
 - If the speaker will be having lunch, then note this at the bottom of the conference registration form and in the specific “charges” line.
 - If the speaker will be attending other parts of the conference, put this note at the bottom of the page and where the funds should come from.
 - Make sure you specify if project grant funds will be used to pay for a speaker’s registration or lunch, etc. You should also specify the project grant number wherever you reference it on these forms.
 - Make sure you total the charges on each form, so you are not overcharged for any speaker’s presence at the conference.

❖ **NCLPA Conference Display**

- Will there be a display board/table area?
 - Contact the appropriate NCLA conference planning committee member to arrange for this. Confirm, confirm, confirm the details—how long should the table be? Will there be a tablecover and tableskirt, or will you need to provide these?
- Who will be responsible for designing and building the display board?
 - What kind of display do you want?
 - Where will your display materials/display board come from?
 - What will the cost be?
 - If the materials/board are borrowed, who will be responsible for returning them to the owner(s) after the conference?

- Where do you want this display in the general display area? Do you specifically want to be next to another NCLA section? Do you specifically want to be near the actual registration booth or some distance from that?

❖ **NCLA Project Grant Funds**

- Will you want to apply for an NCLA project grant to pay for your programming/conference activities?
- Who will be responsible for writing for the grant and managing the grant funds?
- Look at guidelines on NCLA Website under “Forms”.
 - Fill out applications, and submit by the specified deadlines There are several “rounds” of grant writing and submissions throughout the year.
 - Itemize projected expenses. NCLA restricts groups to exactly what they itemize on the various lines of their worksheets, so pay close attention to this. Although you will be making guesses and estimates, be careful to make these as realistic and as detailed as possible.
 - Write a clear and concise summary on what the money will be used for exactly. This is your chance to make your argument for the funding.
 - When you receive your confirmation for grant funding, you will see an amount for which you have been approved and a project grant number. Keep this paperwork in a safe and accessible place. You will need to use the information on reimbursement paperwork and reports following the conference.
 - Two important notes about project grant funds:
 - ◆ These funds CANNOT be used to pay the expenses or an honorarium for a North Carolina professional or paraprofessional librarian.
 - ◆ These funds CANNOT be used to make “capital purchases” as defined by the NCLA Finance Committee. A capital purchase is typically a large cost single item such as a computer, tabletop display, etc. Consult with the Finance Committee Chair on this issue if you are not sure about a particular item.

❖ **Conference Publicity**

- Establish what the NCLA or overall conference committee timeline is for publicity and advertisement.
 - Prepare an NCLPA publicity/marketing timeline within the overall conference timeline
 - Identify journals and other advertising avenues appropriate for your conference programming announcements.
 - Prepare some standard text for your programming advertisements so that you can easily submit material when publicity deadlines approach.
- Who will be in charge of the creation and oversight of the timeline, including submission of text for advertisements?
- Save as many of the advertisement pieces as possible for records and future planning.

❖ **Conference Scholarship**

- The scholarship committee chair is the NCLPA vice-chair/chair-elect. The committee chair’s first responsibility is to name a scholarship committee. One recommendation here is to make the committee representative of all libraries from which applications may be submitted—academic, community college, public, AND special libraries.
- Establish submission and review deadlines for applications.
- Edit/update the conference scholarship packet to reflect new dates/deadlines for submission.
- Determine what publication avenues you will use for advertising the scholarship. These will likely be very similar to your conference advertising avenues
- Develop a timeline for advertising the scholarship

- You may want to write a few standard pieces of text for advertising that you can simply pull from and submit as deadlines approach
- Who will be responsible for handling the publicity?
- Who will receive the completed applications?
 - The person responsible for receiving the completed applications will need to:
 - Keep data on who submitted forms.
 - Write “acceptance” cards letting applicants know their materials have been received
 - Write “incomplete” cards letting applicants know if their packets are incomplete.
- Once the submission and review process is complete, the committee chair will go before the executive board with a roster of 4-5 applications for final review. From this narrowed group, the executive board will select a winner.
- After the executive committee has reviewed the narrowed group of applications and selected an overall winner, you will need to:
 - Notify the winner through phone, email, or letter. Make sure you specify the deadlines for acceptance and determine the winner’s specific requests for day(s) to attend, hotel room preferences, etc.
 - Write letters informing those who did not win.
- Register the winner for the conference, and ask NCLA to directly bill the NCLPA. Also make the winner’s lodging arrangements and pay lunch fee. Project grant funds CANNOT be used to pay these charges due to the winner’s status as a NC library paraprofessional employee.

❖ **Post Conference Duties**

- You will need to submit paperwork for:
 - Committee member reimbursement
 - Payment of speaker expenses
 - Honoraria
- Attach original receipts to an NCLA “Check Request Form,” and send this packet to the NCLA office.
- Caroline Walters in the NCLA office has direct billing records from the hotel, and she can send you copies of these forms for your final grant report and your report to the executive board.
- **MAKE SURE TO KEEP TRACK OF ALL ORIGINAL RECEIPTS FOR THIS PROCESS**
- Prepare and mail “thank you” letters to speakers and conference participants.
- Post pictures on the website or any other place for the NCLPA’s marketing purposes. For example, they can be used for informational brochures or the newsletter.
- Send copies of material to the Archives Committee chair.
 - Conference program
 - Picture copies
 - Form templates
 - Scholarship data

❖ **Miscellaneous Conference Details**

- For each of your sessions, walk through the details.
 - Do you want handouts that advertise other NCLPA activities? (i.e. brochures, announcements/flyers of upcoming events)
 - Do you want NCLPA or NCLA membership forms to disseminate?
- Evaluation forms
 - Pull from a standard NCLPA evaluation form or create a custom one for the specific event.

- Assign an executive board or committee member to retrieve and compile the results from the forms. This information will be used for your general database of information, AND you will need it for your project grant report following the event.
- Gifts/tokens for speakers
 - Assign a committee member to take care of the purchase and/or preparation of gifts.
 - Make sure they are distributed on conference day.
- During the conference days, it is always helpful to assign committee member duties:
 - Speakers' assistants
 - Staffing the display table
 - Distributing and collecting evaluation forms
 - General duties/watchdog at each session venue
 - Has the room been set up according to instructions/need?
 - Is there a need for a sign to indicate a location change?
 - Speaker transportation to and from the airport
 - Photography

Conference Planning Checklist

NCLPA

12/19/2003

00—Not Yet Completed ??—In Process XX—Completed

- 00—Determine NCLPA conference day(s) and date(s)
- 00—Research the names and contact information for the NCLA planning committee members
 - 00—Setup a datasheet on each committee member, relevant contact information, and area of conference responsibility
- 00—Send an email to NCLA planning committee members letting them know you are the NCLPA planner and that you will need relevant information during the planning process.
- 00—Determine what type of sessions the NCLPA will sponsor?
 - 00—Secure co-sponsors where appropriate
- 00—Identify potential speaker(s)
- 00—Contact and negotiate sessions with potential speakers
 - 00—Identify who the regular contact should be for speaker arrangements (speaker's secretary, administrative assistant, etc)
 - 00—Write a confirming letter to speaker(s) and copy the assistant
 - 00—Complete a written agreement for each speaker and submit to speaker for signature
 - 00—Reword and/or adjust speaker agreement language to reflect the specific arrangement.
 - 00—Submit completed and signed agreements to the NCLA office.
 - 00—Request brief biographical information and a picture, if possible, from each speaker
- 00—Complete NCLA's timeslot request forms for each planned conference session (including any meal session such as the business luncheon)
- 00—Submit the timeslot request forms (with room setup specifications) to the appropriate planning committee chair.
- 00—Prepare brief biographical and session content summary for each session, including lunch
 - 00—Submit these brief blurbs to the NCLA print program committee by the established deadline.
 - 00—Submit any pictures you are able to secure from the speakers.
- 00—Prepare an estimated costs worksheet, including speakers' anticipated expenses.
- 00—Get funding approval from NCLPA executive board, using this cost worksheet.
- 00—Determine whether or not project grant funding is needed.
 - 00—Complete project grant application(s) where appropriate.
 - 00—Submit completed project grant applications by deadline.
- 00—Make speaker(s) travel arrangements **OR** get information from speaker/assistant on travel arrangements he/she is making for him/herself.
 - 00—Make arrangements for shuttle to and from the airport (if applicable).
- 00—Make speaker(s) lodging arrangements (through Caroline Walters in the NCLA office and/or information given on the conference website).
- 00—Complete and submit conference registration forms for all speakers, guests, and the scholarship winner.
- 00—Determine speaker(s) equipment needs (projectors, laptops, etc) and secure the necessary materials.
- 00—Setup a file delineating all travel, lodging, and registration information on each speaker.
- 00—Submit final lunch menu and price specifications to the appropriate planning committee member.
- 00—Make appropriate executive board conference assignments.
 - 00—Publicity and marketing
 - 00—Display board design and construction
 - 00—Gifts for speakers

- 00—Gift baskets for lunch door prize winners (if appropriate)
- 00—Photography during conference
- 00—Speaker assistants
- 00—Evaluation managers
- 00—Room setup oversight
- 00—Complete a written roster of duties to distribute to the executive board members.
 - 00—Distribute the roster to the board members.
- 00—Design and build table display.
 - 00—Purchase/create table information (brochures, newsletters, candy, membership information, etc.).
- 00—Create speakers' packets, including
 - 00—Area information
 - 00—Hotel confirmation (if applicable)
 - 00—Airline confirmation (if applicable)
 - 00—Expenses reimbursement forms (if applicable)
 - 00—Conference program information (including schedule and a copy of the particular speaker's information/program blurb)
 - 00—NCLPA information
 - 00—NCLA information
- 00—Mail speakers' packets approximately 3 weeks before conference
- 00—Prepare materials for business lunch meeting.
 - 00—Agenda
 - 00—Door prize support materials (slips for name drawing, pens, paper, etc.)
 - 00—Door prizes
- 00—Prepare an evaluation form for each content session and the lunch session.
- 00—Collect speakers' expense sheets
- 00—Request receipts/expense records for hotels from NCLA office (if reservations were made through that office and billed directly to them)
- 00—Submit grant reports by the established deadline (60 days following the conference) (if applicable)
- 00—Complete and submit reimbursement paperwork to the NCLA office
 - 00—Write necessary check requests for NCLA
- 00—Write and send "thank you" notes to all NCLPA conference speakers
- 00—Complete a final report for distribution to the NCLPA executive board.
 - 00—Include expenses and how they were paid.
 - 00—Summary of programs and attendance
 - 00—Summary of evaluations
- 00—Update the conference planning protocol and planning checklist with appropriate changes/additions.

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP PLANNING TASKLIST

- 00—Assemble a conference scholarship committee.
- 00—Identify conference scholarship advertisement avenues.
- 00—Prepare a scholarship marketing timeline.
- 00—Prepare advertising text/content
- 00—Update the scholarship application packet to reflect new deadlines
- 00—Establish a “go to” person to receive completed applications.
 - 00—Keep a spreadsheet with name, address, phone number, institution, and date of submission for each applicant.
 - 00—Write response cards to applicants indicating receipt of application materials
 - 00—Write response cards to applicants denoting if an application is incomplete
- 00—Schedule preliminary scholarship review meetings.
- 00—Review submitted applications and narrow the field for executive board review.
- 00—Report to the executive board, and establish the conference scholarship winner.
- 00—Notify the scholarship winner.
- 00—Design and create a conference scholarship winner certificate.

***Note: Information on making the scholarship winner’s registration, lodging and travel arrangements for the conference is listed in the general tasklist.