# : Exhibits and Vendors

Contact potential vendor exhibitors; determine exhibit fees and hours; coordinate registration of vendor exhibitors and arrangements for their equipment and telecommunications needs.

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| ***Coordination Notes*** Be sure to check with:* *President and Local Arrangements Chair –* to confirm who will contact vendors to solicit donations and exhibits and to be sure they have the information needed to acknowledge and publicly thank vendor sponsors.
* *Treasurer –*for vendor contact list.
* *Food and Registration –* to be sure vendors are counted for meals and their meal selections are received.
* *Equipment and Meeting Rooms –*to take care of vendors’ equipment, power and telecommunications needs.
* *Publications* – to inform them of vendors sponsoring and exhibiting, so this information can be in the final program, and signs can be made acknowledging the vendors at their sponsored events.
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***Budgeting***

Vendors pay to exhibit at MAALL. Anticipated revenue from vendor exhibit fees should be included in the meetings income budget, but expenses charged to MAALL (such as mailing costs and telecommunications for exhibits) must also be included in the expense budget.

The number of vendors is likely to vary by the size and location of the meeting. Meetings in rural areas are unlikely to attract many vendors.

The fees should be set high enough to cover all of MAALL’s costs, plus make a small profit.

Be sure you have complete information on telecommunications fees. The exhibits area should include wireless as part of MAALL’s hotel contract and have sufficient electrical outlets for multiple computers. There can be extra charges for adding outlets, if the room used does not have a sufficient number.

Be sure that you know exactly what equipment the hotel will provide and the costs for it, so you can inform the vendors.

**Vendor solicitations**

IMPORTANT! In order to avoid vendor confusion, only one person (generally the Local Arrangements Chair) should handle all initial contacts with vendors about both making donations of cash or merchandise and purchasing exhibits space. Therefore there needs to be a clear determination early on about who will handle vendor contacts *(See Chapter 2, section on Fundraising and “Contacting Vendors” in this chapter.)* Multiple contacts are very confusing to vendors.

***Types of Exhibits***

The following are the usual types of exhibits:

Staffed booth:

Vendor representative sits at booth; online demo capability available.

Vendor supplies all equipment, sets up and takes down booth.

MAALL arranges with hotel for table, chair(s), or any other requested equipment.

Materials only exhibit:

Vendor mails materials.

MAALL arranges with hotel for table.

MAALL member sets up and takes down materials*.*

Materials only exhibit, complimentary:

MAALL might choose to allow free space for an exhibit from a professional organization, such as AALL, MALLCO or SLA, especially if it can be combined with something else and there is no additional charge by hotel.

Organization mails materials.

MAALL arranges with hotel for table.

MAALL member sets up and takes down materials.

***Location and Hours***

Work with hotel staff and with other Local Arrangements Committee members (especially Food, and Equipment and Meeting Room Leaders) to determine best location for exhibits.

If possible, exhibits should be located where members will pass by them frequently.

Some MAALL meetings have found it desirable to serve breaks in the room where the exhibits are located. The downside is it can get too crowded if the room is not big enough.

If possible, have the exhibits in an area that can be locked at night so vendors do not have to take everything to their rooms.

Exhibit hours may depend on program and other activities that are taking place. Generally, have the exhibits open when most members will be around. Exhibits usually open on Thursday and close sometime Friday afternoon. There are normally not enough participants Saturday morning to justify having exhibits.

***Contacting Vendors***

Vendors’ calendars fill up, so it is a good idea for the President or Local Arrangements Chair to send them a “save-the-date” notice as soon as MAALL’s meeting dates are set.

About two months before the meeting, they should be sent a letter requesting donations, the exhibit registration form, and hotel registration information. *(See sample at end of chapter.)*

The letter should come from the Local Arrangements Chair and be on MAALL letterhead. The President should be copied. If another member of Local Arrangements is handling the Exhibits, the letter might direct vendors to send responses to that person.

Contact the MAALL Treasurer for the latest listing of vendor contacts; supplement with local information if applicable.

Also you may want to check with vendors exhibiting at AALL the summer before to find out the best contact persons.

Do not forget local legal newspapers, bar associations, library schools, library professional organizations, etc.

Registration form should clearly state fees and exactly what equipment is included. It should also state that each exhibit fee includes participation in all meals and events for one vendor representative. Include a cancellation policy on the form indicating amount refundable and time limit.

Supply Publications Leader with a list of exhibitors to put in the printed program and for signs.

Write again to vendors after you receive their registration to confirm and provide them additional information, such as hotel shipping address.

Keep a spreadsheet list of exhibitors who have confirmed that they are coming, with contact names, and amount of money collected and another spreadsheet with amount of money expected to be collected.

***Equipment and Setup***

All vendors will need a table; some may want two. Be sure to find out the size of the tables and include that in the information you send vendors.

All staffed exhibits will need one or more chairs. Some vendors may want easels or other equipment. Provide a list of the equipment available from the hotel and any additional costs.

Be sure to check with hotel on what is included inMAALL’s hotelcontract and what MAALL will have to pay for. Consult with the Local Arrangement Chair regarding any contract questions. Charge vendors for any additional costs, or advise them they should supply themselves.

Note that the vendors are responsible for set up and take down (except for unstaffed exhibits).

***Vendor Participation in Meals and Events***

*What is covered by vendor exhibit registration*

Each vendor exhibit fee includes participation by one vendor representative in all meals and events. Therefore if there are mail choices, the vendor registration form should ask for their choices (or the regular meal form can be used.)

If vendors wish to have additional representatives participate in meals, they should mark the additional meals sections of the meal portion of the registration form and pay the cost of the additional meals.

If a vendor reserves space but does not mark meal choices, follow-up with a reminder about meals. This could be included with the confirmation letter.

*Sponsored meals*

If a vendor makes a contribution to “sponsor” a meal, the amount donated should be as close as possible to the actual total cost of the meal. If the vendor wants to have more than one representative at the meal, the donation should be sufficient to cover the meal costs for the representatives. If the donation does not cover the entire cost, the vendor should pay the meal costs for any additional representatives whose meal is not included in an exhibits registration.

If the vendor is bringing additional representatives whose meals are covered by the donation, have vendor complete the meal purchase part of the form for meal choices but mark it complimentary.

IMPORTANT: Be sure all vendor meal purchases are reported to Registration Leader so they will be properly included in meal counts!

*Other sponsorship issues*

If the vendor sponsors a break, the amount donated should be as close to the cost of the break as possible. No additional meals or exhibits registration are included with the break sponsorship.

Do not accept sponsorship of the Hospitality room in lieu of an exhibit registration. (A vendor did this at a MAALL meeting and hung around the Hospitality room, making members uncomfortable.)

***At the Meeting***

Check with exhibitors to be sure they have the proper equipment, that they have located any materials shipped, etc. Work as needed with hotel staff or other Local Arrangements Committee members to resolve any problems.

Ask Local Arrangements Chair to make announcement(s) reminding members to visit the exhibits.

Find out from vendors what should be done with any materials that are leftover.

***After the Meeting***

Write to vendors thanking them for their participation and encouraging them to come back the next year!

Send the Treasurer any changes to the vendor contact list.

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| **Exhibits and Vendors Samples** Initial vendor contact letter, St. Louis 2012 Vendor registration form, Omaha 2013 |