

1. **Staffing Your Chapter:** When forming a planning committee, try to include people from several geographic areas and practice specialties (rehab, physician office, research, hospital, or dietitian).
2. **Choosing Content:** It may help to conduct a survey to find out what people your area would like to learn (needs assessment) and what days and times would be best for a meeting. We recommend that chapters plan 2 or 3 meetings per year – we do not want you to get burned out!
3. **Paying for the Meeting:** Even though there are no dues, some chapters have charged for the meal they are providing. If you meet in a restaurant, attendees can pay for their own dinner; or if you meet in a hotel for breakfast, the chapter leader could collect money for the cost of breakfast and pay the hotel directly. It is okay to provide a continental breakfast or appetizers to cut down your cost. Meeting expenses can be billed to the PCNA National Office to be paid via credit card or check, whichever the vendor prefers. We strongly recommend that sponsors do not pay the hotel or restaurant directly; rather, they should send sponsorship funds in the form of an unrestricted educational grant to the National Office for deposit into your chapter financial account.
4. **Securing Sponsorship:** To secure sponsor funding for your meeting, contact your local pharmaceutical, device, and industry reps. Keep them informed of your meeting by sending meeting notices and frequent updates. Feel free to approach more than one sponsor for meeting support. Make sure that if you have more than one sponsor all of them are listed on your brochures/flyers.
5. **Selecting a Location:** Please rotate the location of meetings if you are covering an area greater than a 30-minute drive for participants. Invite local members to serve as volunteer hosts/hostesses for these meetings. To get the best hotel deal, use a competitive bidding process and allow several different hotels to submit proposals. Your city's Convention & Visitor's Bureau (CVB) provides this service free of charge. Ask your CVB rep to send out your request for proposal (RFP) including "meeting specs" to several properties. They will need your preferred dates, estimated number of people, room set up (preferably crescent rounds), and a basic description of the food & beverage you will need. The CVB rep will do the leg work for you – they will contact the appropriate hotels, collect the results, and send you a summary of the proposals. Even if you know which property you would like to use, you can use the other proposals as leverage for negotiating better rates at the preferred hotel.
6. **Negotiating a Hotel Contract:** Negotiating a hotel contract can be challenging, but keep in mind that everything is negotiable. From room rental fees to food & beverage prices to audio visual charges, nothing is set in stone. Hotel prices depend on the city/region, number of attendees, size of the room, and how much food & beverage you are buying. Hotels will almost always discount or waive their room rental fees if food & beverage is purchased. To avoid potential liability issues, pay close attention to three clauses in particular: 1. reciprocal indemnification, 2. attrition, and 3. cancellation (including force majeure). Hotel contracts vary widely are written to favor the hotel, so we have worked with an attorney to develop a standard template for hotel agreements. We encourage you to [download the PCNA hotel agreement](#) and use it as a starting point in negotiations.
7. **Ordering Food in a Hotel Setting:** If you are meeting in a hotel and serving food, buffet style usually works well. Typically, 20% of the registrants for chapter meetings will not show up, so we recommend guaranteeing food & beverage for 80% of the total number of registrants. Even with this reduction, there always ends up being food left over. This helps to reduce the cost of the meeting and prevent excessive waste.
8. **Marketing Assistance from PCNA National Office:** Ask the National Office to send mass emails, provide mailing lists, and post chapter information on the website and in the PCNA e-newsletter.
9. **Recruiting New Members:** The New York Metropolitan chapter sends a follow-up letter and a PCNA membership application to non-members who attend their chapter meetings. This is a great way for PCNA and the chapters to increase membership!
10. **Breaking the Ice:** Networking and making personal connections continue to be a key component that draws people to meetings. To add value for attendees, we recommend starting your meeting with an icebreaker activity. For example, you could ask people to pair up and learn about one another and then introduce each other to their table or to the whole group. For larger groups, you could ask people to take a few minutes to meet the people next to them and then encourage them to keep the discussions going at the breaks and after the meeting.
11. **Explaining PCNA Benefits:** It is important to spend at least 20 minutes at your meeting talking about PCNA and the benefits of membership. The National Office has a [downloadable slide set](#) that outlines the mission and goals of PCNA and other valuable information about the organization. Chapter leaders should try to emphasize the clinical tools and the educational opportunities (chapter meetings, Annual Symposium, online CE courses) that members receive exclusively through PCNA. The National Office would be happy to supply you with display copies of PCNA clinical tools and educational materials.
12. **Evaluating Meetings:** CE accreditation requires that participants evaluate each program. Please provide evaluation forms for participants to submit their feedback and suggest future topics and speakers.