

Application for: **Outstanding Chapter Awards**

**Application Due: May 21, 2021**

Chapter Name:	Minnesota Chapter of NIGP
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Check the box for the Outstanding Chapter Award you are submitting for: (a Chapter can select up to two)

- ☒ Outstanding Chapter Operations Award
- How does your chapter excel in its operating processes, including policies and procedures, budgeting, recognition of agencies and individuals and involvement with NIGP?
- ☐ Outstanding Chapter Membership Award
- How well does your chapter market membership benefits and resources and what are your methods for membership retention and growth?
- ☐ Outstanding Chapter Advocacy and Outreach Award
- What practices and operations has your chapter demonstrated to be an effective advocate for members and our profession?
- ☐ Outstanding Chapter Professional Development Award
- How does your chapter go above and beyond providing educational resources and other opportunities to your membership?

Applications will be scored on the following criteria:

1. Explained in detail so that another Chapter could understand and adapt or replicate it
2. Outcomes or results are clearly identified (proof of success)
3. Uniqueness of approach or innovation (either new to you or to others)
4. Lessons learned for others attempting to adapt or replicate it

All submissions must include this page along with the documentation supporting one of the four categories. Documentation for each Outstanding Chapter Award must be no more than four pages total.

Submit application to: [Chapters@nigp.org](mailto:Chapters@nigp.org)

For Questions: Email or call Jennifer Steffan at [jsteffan@nigp.org](mailto:jsteffan@nigp.org) 800-367-6447 ext. 232

# Outstanding Chapter Operations Award



## Operating in a Pandemic

2020 showed how quickly the world could be required to pivot. However, for members of the Minnesota Chapter of NIGP, operations were changed so little that many would believe it was planned that way all along.

In 2018, the Minnesota Chapter started to investigate how to better connect with members across this state. Minnesota spans about 360 miles East to West, and 407 miles from North to South. For procurement professionals outside of the metro area, a commute to a chapter meeting was a large time commitment. This often resulted in more time spent driving to and from the site, than capitalizing on the professional development opportunities being offered. Utilizing the knowledge and experience of our Sister Chapter, the Alaska-Hawaii Governmental Procurement Association, we began exploring the use of technology to virtually connect with members.

### 2019 Annual Conference



### 2020 Annual Conference



# Virtual Operations



## The How:

Shifting from in-person to virtual offerings required us to examine how members connect and ensure that what we were implementing, provided the same value & opportunity for interaction.

Using **Zoom**, we set up our scheduled meetings with our Chapter Ambassador. Our goal is to push out this schedule in January so members can block their time and make plans to attend. The agenda for each meeting is pushed out on a monthly basis along with a reminder of the meeting the week of. No one enjoys sitting through a meeting with poor sound or video quality. As a chapter, we purchased a microphone and camera to ensure a more enjoyable experience.

Day of, we utilize **Co-facilitators**. The Board President will lead the meeting, but a second individual will help monitor the virtual side of things. Often this individual will catch technical difficulties like microphone issues. This ensures that the delivery is consistent and that those online are not having a different experience than what we intended.

Agendas always include the first **thirty minutes for Networking**, where we welcome members and provide ice-breaker questions. In our virtual sessions, we use board members to help facilitate these conversations and introductions. At times we have found the **Break-out rooms** feature that is available on the Zoom platform to be wonderful to focus on specific topics and deeper conversations amongst small groups.

Every meeting held by the Minnesota Chapter of NIGP includes our business meeting and a professional development session. In the past for our business meeting, board members would verbally present which wasn't always the most effective or captivating for those in the audience. With the online platform, we better utilize **visuals** for our presentations. Overall, this has resulted in better delivery and prompted greater discussion, questions, and input from our membership.



## Tools Needed for Success

- **Virtual Meeting Platform**
  - National NIGP provides Zoom free of charge to chapters.
- **Microphone**
  - Preferably one that can cancel static noise and with volume control.
- **Webcam**
  - We have found standard laptop or desktop cameras will suffice. However; when conducting a meeting that is in-person and virtual, having multiple angles and good camera positioning is important to capture speakers.
- **Co-facilitators**
  - Having one individual lead the meeting and one individual focus on the virtual side will help ensure no participation is missed and that the virtual experience is running smoothly.
  - Co-facilitators also help address questions and comments raised in the chatbox.



## Lessons learned

- **Choosing the right presenters**
  - The biggest hiccup we have experienced with virtual meetings is finding presenters for our professional development sessions that will allow for online attendees and are effective in utilizing a virtual environment. We have seen many speakers who are normally engaging and informative, fall flat when virtual.
- **Build in breaks**
  - In the virtual environment your attendees will still need breaks. Build these in strategically and make sure to create slides to provide a visual prompt when breaks are occurring. Therefore; if someone was having technical difficulties or is just joining, they can be aware of what is going on.
- **Explore your platform**
  - Using Zoom to conduct meetings was new to some members, sharing tips and tricks before the meeting will help ensure things run smoothly.
  - Technology is ever-evolving so staying on top of available features provides additional engagement opportunities.
    - The Break-out rooms feature is great for facilitating small group discussions, icebreakers, and topic-specific learning.
    - Screen sharing and recording features are easy to use and transfer controls.



## Success

The virtual environment makes taking attendance easier than ever! As a chapter, Minnesota recently introduced an incentive program that rewards members for their attendance and engagement. We appreciate the ease of capturing this data in the virtual environment and how easily it can be shared in our membership.

In 2020, the Minnesota chapter averaged 50 attendees at each of our bi-monthly meetings. This is approximately 25% of our chapter membership and shows no decline in our transition from in-person to virtual meetings. Overall 55% of our chapter members participated in at least one education program offered in 2020. Members were able to save time and mileage by attending virtually and as a board we no longer needed to coordinate breakfast/coffee or book a meeting room, resulting in savings in our budget. Zoom also records the meetings so members with scheduling conflicts and unable to attend in-person can still access the content presented.

Utilizing virtual meetings has allowed our chapter to enhance the offerings provided to our members. Many presenters utilized for virtual sessions had previously provided much higher quotes to our chapter for in-person sessions. When re-quoted for virtual sessions, we received 50-70% discounts on those quotes from three of the headlining speakers who were booked for the now virtual conference and resulting in significantly savings on speaker travel expenses.

Our highest attended event is traditionally our Annual Conference spanning over three days. Attendance typically averages almost half of our total membership and 2020 was no different, with 98 attendees. While most chapters were canceling their conference, Minnesota was able to successfully pivot to the virtual environment. The conference feedback received was not only encouraging but comparable to the feedback received in 2019 for the in-person event.

**Thriving during an unprecedented year, with no reduction of programming, or drop in attendance is a very proud accomplishment of the Minnesota Chapter of NIGP.**