

**Utah Chapter NIGP**  
**Outstanding Chapter Award (OCA) Application 2021**  
**Award Application for Outstanding Chapter Membership Award**

Utah Chapter NIGP is excited once again to apply for the Outstanding Chapter Membership Award! Our chapter has experienced incredible growth in the past few years, with an increase again during a pandemic in 2020. We are grateful for the opportunity to share with you our successes during an unprecedented year.

Historically, Utah Chapter NIGP was grateful to receive recognition at Forum 2019 for the highest percentage increase in 2018, and we were able to grow from a Small to a Medium sized chapter with a 60% increase in size. In 2019, we experienced an additional 14% increase in membership. In 2020, even during a pandemic, we had 70 new members for a 17.68% increase in membership from 2019 to 2020. We feel this increase happened due to a few reasons:

- We saw a broad range of new members from various types of agencies. We had more rural members join. We think this may be due to the switch to virtual formats of trainings, which made it easier for them to attend than to try to travel to an in-person meeting. (Please note: we did have virtual options to join chapter meetings and trainings prior to COVID, but we only had a handful of people participate this way prior to the pandemic). We also saw some agencies downsize and procurement professionals let go. Other current employees new to procurement took on this role, and have joined to better understand procurement and how to operate for their agencies. We have also had greater contact with cities and towns and have encouraged those with procurement responsibilities to join our chapter.
- Because we were no longer able to meet in person starting in March 2020, we felt it was important to find ways to keep in touch with chapter members, and to continue to provide educational opportunities. We started what we called a “Brown Bag Learning Series” in conjunction with the State of Utah Division of Purchasing. This is a one-hour training on procurement topics, legislative updates relating to procurement, etc. These are held during lunch hour, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm on the third Thursday of each month that does not have a chapter meeting, and we do have occasional special trainings that will happen on a more frequent basis. Prior to the pandemic, we held chapter meetings 5 times per year. Now, we were able to ensure we had monthly contact with chapter members. Attendance has been high for these trainings with several visitors attending. They have been very well received and supported by chapter members. This also allows those who still need professional development training hours for recertifications to continue to receive training. As many agencies transitioned to working from home, we found that there was an increased desire to have training opportunities available.
- In addition to the Brown Bag Learning Series, we switched to a completely virtual format for our March and November 2020 chapter meetings. These created great opportunities for officers and the Board of the chapter to figure out how to transition meetings to a virtual platform. This helped us think more “out of the box” and come up with ideas that would work virtually. As most of us have learned in 2020, we can still conduct meetings and provide relevant trainings even though we cannot connect in person.

- We were in the process of planning a Reverse Trade Show for May 2020, which ultimately had to be cancelled. We were disappointed that we would be unable to participate in this event. Brooke Smith, the current Chapter Vice-President, had the idea to do a “No Show Trade Show” that would allow vendors to submit a one-minute video and/or a one-page PDF file explaining their company and what they could provide. As a courtesy to our vendors that we had to turn away from the RTS, we allowed these videos to be posted to our chapter website for 5 months free of charge. To encourage our membership to go and review the videos, a trivia list was created. For those that could answer each question from each of the videos that were submitted, they were entered into an Amazon gift card drawing. We used this as a public relations tool with our vendors, especially in a year where many businesses found themselves struggling, and also to let vendors know that we support them.

We were honored to be asked by NIGP to co-present a webinar entitled *How to Go Virtual: Turn Your Conference and Trade Show into Virtual Offerings* on July 14, 2020. This gave our chapter the opportunity to share with other chapters our success with the No Show Trade Show idea, and present how it worked in the hopes that it would help other chapters as they figured out how to have virtual offerings available.

- We had just awarded two full scholarships for NIGP Forum in Chicago right before everything shut down. Both recipients instead requested to use part of their award to cover the Virtual Forum 2020 registration fees, and we are allowing their balances to carry over. One of the two has already requested the same for 2021. We were happy to still allow scholarship funds to be used for virtual events in 2020.
- A small in person “watch party” was held on August 25, 2020 during the Forum Awards ceremony. We had been notified previously that Jason Steinmann, in addition to being Utah’s first Chapter Ambassador for Area 9, was to be awarded with the National Buyer of the Year Award. We were thrilled for him and this accomplishment and were eager to honor this recognition at this party. Our excitement could not be contained when it was announced that the Utah Chapter NIGP was awarded the Outstanding Chapter Award for Membership. In addition, we were honored to receive the Gold Chapter Seal status. Both have brought additional recognition to the chapter as these are the first National awards our chapter has received. We are grateful for the Chapter Seal program, as the questions allow us to see areas that we can improve in and become a better resource for our members.

NIGP again asked us to present a webinar on our Outstanding Chapter Award in Membership, which we presented on December 15, 2020. We were happy to share our application information and the various ideas we tried or offered in our chapter to help increase our membership.

- Utah Chapter NIGP was excited to receive a scholarship from NIGP to host a NIGP course in 2020. We selected the Core Certificate - Foundations of Leadership Course, which was held October 20-21, 2020 and led by Lourdes Coss. We filled all slots available for the course amongst our chapter members, and the course filled in a matter of a couple of weeks. We had participants from a wide variety of agencies, and participants indicated that this was a fantastic

course in which they learned several things they planned to take back to their agencies. Several participants were members that were either new to the chapter or had not previously involved themselves with NIGP other than attending chapter meetings or the Brown Bag Learning Series trainings. It was a huge win-win situation for our chapter to see the excitement from those that participated, and has created excitement and anticipation for us to host more courses in the future. The content and instructor were both exceptional. This was the first course that our chapter has sponsored. Now that we have seen the excitement and how it works, our chapter is eager to continue hosting courses in coming years.

- We saw an increase in members deciding to pursue certification in 2020. The chapter created a CPPB Study Group in April to help those studying for the CPPB exam. We also had an enthusiastic response to the new NIGP-CPP certification that was announced. We appreciate the introductory period that allowed members to obtain study materials and take the exam for free, as this encouraged greater participation from our chapter members. We are elated that seven members of our chapter were honored to receive this new certification in 2020. Our chapter is thrilled to see the support of our members for NIGP's new certification program.

Though unexpected, we are ecstatic to see our membership numbers increase exponentially in 2020. We feel that success partially came from enduring a pandemic, which is not necessarily something we want to repeat from year to year, but it has certainly opened our eyes to new possibilities and new modes of engagement with chapter members. As we have all navigated a "new normal" in 2020, we have learned that we can find success in supporting our chapter members by doing the following:

1. We should consider and look at more virtual options for our members to participate in various activities, and offer a greater variety of options for training. In 2020, we initiated the following:
  - ❖ Brown Bag Learning Series: a one-hour professional development training during lunch hour
  - ❖ Virtual conference offerings: these allow members to participate from their computer, and don't need to worry about lost travel time or expenses if they are in outlying areas
  - ❖ Chapter sponsored NIGP courses: Since these are currently offered virtually in most cases, class participants can join from anywhere in the state, as well as participants from any other NIGP chapter, which creates additional revenue for our chapter- a definite win-win for us.
  - ❖ Social event options: plans are underway to provide social events that could have a virtual component to them, allowing more people to participate.
2. Just because the world stops for a pandemic doesn't mean that we should stop participating in professional development activities, and strive for excellence in our careers by pursuing certification or other higher education. As a chapter, this is our most important role by making sure we are offering educational options to members. This can be supported by offering more scholarships and various types of professional development meetings and topics that are relevant to our members in their day-to-day assignments. Networking has been more difficult to do without in person events, so we have tried to compensate with valuable monthly educational meetings.
3. We need to share our successes as a chapter with our members. We have our Gold chapter seal proudly displayed on our chapter website. All of our chapter newsletters have included the seal at the bottom of the newsletter. We also announced our Outstanding Chapter Award for

membership through our meetings, website and email communications. We also celebrated Jason Steinmann's National Buyer of the Year award via an in-person party with him and his office, meeting announcements and in our written communications. We want our members to be excited to be involved in a chapter that is seeing success and growth, which will keep our members active and involved and they will see the value of staying with and participating with our chapter.

4. We need to find new and exciting formats to host larger conferences or events, such as Speed Meetings or substitutes for Reverse Trade Shows that could be handled virtually, but still be valuable to both chapter members and the vendor community. We are unsure how long it may be before larger groups can gather in person. We hope we may be able to return to in-person meetings by the end of 2021; however in the meantime, we need to find some new twists and options to existing meetings and conferences. This allows us to keep meetings fresh, upbeat and stimulating, which will keep our members coming back and attendance high.
5. Although we have seen much success in recent years in increasing membership numbers, it is time to diversify our marketing and search for additional avenues that can bring added growth to our chapter. In 2020, we did have more outreach to rural parts of the state, as well as cities and towns through advertising with other associations where members may have procurement responsibilities along with their other job duties. We need to continue this trend to search for possible members.

We hope other chapters may find our experiences and ideas helpful in their membership outreach efforts. We are encouraged by the growth we have again experienced in 2020, and welcome the opportunity to share or work with other chapters, to exchange ideas or assist one another.



Samples of our Brown Bag Learning Series topics that were presented to Utah Chapter NIGP members in 2020.