NIGP FORUM 2026

Make the Most of NIGP Forum 2026

Your **How-To Guide** for a Phenomenal Experience

In Person | Virtual

August 23 – 26, 2026

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How-To Prioritize Learning and Professional Development by Attending NIGP Forum 2026

NIGP Forum offers cutting-edge educational content and expert insights to keep you informed about the latest industry trends and best practices. As the largest conference dedicated exclusively to public procurement professionals in North America, NIGP Forum provides unparalleled value.

We make learning and professional growth accessible, impactful, and focused on delivering maximum benefits to you.

Recognizing that our members have diverse learning preferences and varying time and budget constraints, we offer the flexibility to attend the NIGP Forum either in person or virtually. No matter how you choose to participate, you're guaranteed an unforgettable experience.

IN-PERSON BENEFITS

Columbus, OH | Minimum of 19.5 CH*

- **Immersive Experience:** Full access to the Forum environment, energy, and community.
- **Networking Power:** Face-to-face connections, spontaneous conversations, and stronger relationship-building.
- **Exclusive Content:** Some sessions, workshops, or networking events may only be offered in person.
- **Exhibit Hall Access:** Interact directly with suppliers, solution providers, and partners.
- **Professional Recognition:** Celebrate awards, milestones, and achievements in a live setting with peers.
- **Career Visibility:** Being seen and present with colleagues, mentors, and leaders across the profession.
- **Local Experience:** Explore the host city with colleagues, adding a cultural and social dimension.

VIRTUAL BENEFITS

- **Accessibility:** Join from anywhere without travel costs or time away from home.
- **Budget-Friendly:** Lower registration costs make participation more feasible for individuals and teams.
- **Flexible Learning:** Attend live or on-demand sessions.
- **Broader Reach:** Opportunity for more team members to participate, even if travel budgets are limited.
- **Efficient Time Use:** Less disruption to work schedules while still gaining professional development.
- **Certification Support:** Earn contact hours and credits from wherever you are.
- **Global Access:** Easier participation for geographically distant attendees.

* After the conference, you may be eligible for additional contact hours through on-demand learning. However, for certification tracking, be sure to check with each certifying body to confirm what qualifies.

How To Decide Which Experience is Best For You?

Amara is a Buyer for a large agency in Florida and is working toward her NIGP-CPP re-certification this year.

While she has adapted to online learning since the pandemic, she thrives in an in-person environment and values the energy of face-to-face interactions.

This year, she's attending the NIGP Forum in person—not just for the learning experience, but also to connect with potential software suppliers for a major project she's leading. With several of her shortlisted vendors exhibiting at Forum, it's the perfect opportunity to meet them and explore solutions firsthand.

Jen is the Contracts Manager at her agency and manages everything on her own.

Professional development is a top priority for her, but attending a conference for an extended period is challenging without backup at her agency.

That's why she's thrilled that NIGP offers a virtual Forum option. It allows her to access valuable learning opportunities on her own schedule—without compromising her responsibilities.

John, the CPO at his agency in Kentucky, has been a longtime attendee of the NIGP Forum. He values reconnecting with peers, draws inspiration from the speakers, and always leaves with new connections and fresh ideas.

This year, after hiring four new team members, John is taking a strategic approach to professional development. While he plans to attend in person, he's having the rest of his team join virtually to make the most of their training budget—ensuring everyone gains valuable insights in a way that fits their needs.

Mateen was recently promoted to Sourcing Manager at his agency and just discovered NIGP Forum through his manager. He's eager to attend, but as a new dad, work travel is more challenging to plan around.

He's thrilled that a virtual option allows him to access all the valuable learning without added stress on his personal life.

Plus, with plans to earn his NIGP-CPP this year, attending virtually helps him maximize his training budget—ensuring he can cover all the professional development opportunities in his growth plan.

How To Get Your Manager or CPO to Support Your Attendance at NIGP Forum 2026

We understand that securing funding to attend NIGP Forum can be challenging. Whether you're seeking approval from your direct manager, CPO, or HR team, having the right approach can make all the difference.

These key talking points and strategies will help you build a strong case, making it easier to communicate the value of attending and gain support from those who control the budget. See here for email template you can customize for your needs.

FOCUS ON THE VALUE/ROI

- As procurement professionals, you're always focused on maximizing value for your projects—your learning and professional development should be no different.
- With one of the strongest contact-hour-per-dollar returns in the profession, Forum is hands down the best value for meeting your learning requirements.
- By attending NIGP Forum, your agency also strengthens its presence within the public procurement community by building visibility, staying informed, and remaining connected to peer organizations nationwide.

LIGHTEN THE LOAD FOR EVERYONE AND COMMUNICATE IN ADVANCE

- Stepping away from daily responsibilities to attend NIGP Forum can be a challenge, but with the right preparation, you can make the most of your experience—whether in-person or virtual.
- Whenever possible, wrap up key projects or milestones before Forum begins so you can fully engage without distractions.
- If that's not feasible, designate a trusted colleague to handle any critical tasks in your absence. Be sure to communicate this plan to your team and relevant stakeholders to ensure a smooth workflow while you're at Forum.

SEEK ALTERNATIVE SOURCES FOR FUNDING

- Thanks to our partnership with Sourcewell, NIGP has been awarding scholarships to members for NIGP Forum and many of our other programs offered throughout the year.
- Scholarships for NIGP Forum 2026 are available from December 17 - January 18, 2026. Visit nigp.org/learning/scholarship-fund to learn more and apply.
- Check with your local chapter to see if they have scholarship programs available for chapter members.

Regardless of how you attend, you'll have 60 days of post-conference access to all content, making it easy to catch every session.

How To Get Your Manager or CPO to Support Your Attendance at NIGP Forum 2026

PLAN STRATEGICALLY AND TIE BACK TO HOW IT BENEFITS YOUR ENTITY

- To get the most value from attending the NIGP Forum, approach it with clear goals and a well-thought-out plan for what you want to learn and achieve before the conference begins.
- Each year, NIGP staff, subject matter experts, and dedicated volunteers curate the content based on current industry trends and the most pressing needs of procurement professionals. Many, if not all, of the sessions will provide real-world insights that can directly impact your role and help you navigate challenges within your organization.
- When justifying your attendance, emphasize how the knowledge and skills gained will benefit both you and your entity. Drawing a clear connection between the NIGP Forum sessions and the practical improvements it can bring to your work will strengthen your case for participation.

REMEMBER, IT'S MORE THAN JUST LEARNING AND NETWORKING

- While formal learning and networking remain core, the full NIGP Forum experience offers so much more.
- Whether you attend in person or virtually, you'll have countless opportunities to connect with new people and expand your professional network.
- Unexpected insights often arise from casual conversations—whether it's realizing others share similar challenges or receiving real-time solutions to pressing questions, you never know what valuable knowledge you'll gain.
- Beyond professional growth, NIGP Forum also provides a chance to step away from daily responsibilities, celebrate the procurement profession, and recognize collective achievements with your peers.

How to Maximize Your Participation at NIGP FORUM 2026

Attending NIGP Forum—whether in person or virtually—is an investment of time and resources. To get the most value out of the experience, follow these strategies before, during, and after the event.

BEFORE YOU GO

Set Clear Goals – Identify what you want to achieve, such as learning specific skills, networking with industry leaders, or finding solutions to challenges.

Plan Your Schedule – Review the agenda in advance, prioritize key sessions, and schedule time for networking and discussions.

Engage on Social Media – Follow event discussions on the NIGP Forum Nsite group and on LinkedIn and Facebook to connect with speakers and other attendees beforehand.

DURING NIGP FORUM

Be an Active Participant – Ask questions, join discussions, and contribute insights virtually in chat boxes or breakout sessions.

Network Strategically – Introduce yourself to speakers, panelists, fellow attendees, and exhibitors; exchange contact information for future follow-ups.

Take Actionable Notes – Focus on key takeaways, ideas, and how you can implement them in your role or organization.

Share Your Experience – Post highlights, quotes, or reflections on social media to engage with a broader audience.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

Follow Up with Connections – Send LinkedIn requests, emails, or messages to continue conversations with new contacts.

Apply What You've Learned – Share insights with your team or chapter, present key takeaways, or implement new strategies in your organization.

Access On-Demand Content – Revisit session recordings and materials to reinforce learning and gain additional insights.

Provide Feedback & Stay Engaged – Share feedback with organizers, engage in post-event discussions, and prepare for future conferences.

By approaching a conference with intention, engagement, and follow-through, you can turn it into a valuable experience that benefits both you and your organization.

How to Enhance Engagement When Attending NIGP Forum Virtually: Host Group Viewings

Watching virtual conference sessions as a group can make the experience more interactive, engaging, and impactful. Whether in-person or through a virtual watch party, group viewings create a shared learning environment where participants can discuss insights in real time.

Ways to Make Group Viewings More Engaging:

Host a Watch Party

Gather colleagues in a meeting room or set up a virtual watch session on Zoom or Teams.

Live Chat & Discussion

Encourage participants to share thoughts, ask questions, and engage in discussions during and after the session.

Take Collaborative Notes

Use a shared document to compile key takeaways and action items.

Plan a Post-Session Debrief

Schedule a follow-up conversation to discuss how the insights can be applied to your work.

By watching sessions together, teams can enhance collaboration, reinforce key learnings, and make the virtual conference feel more dynamic and engaging.

How to Make Your NIGP Forum Attendance Newsworthy for You and Your Department

Attending NIGP Forum is a valuable experience—so make sure your department and organization know about it!

Broadcast Your Participation

Share that you and your team attended the Forum and emphasize key takeaways.

Leverage Internal Communications

Use newsletters, intranet updates, or an online community space to highlight important insights, impactful sessions, and new strategies learned.

Showcase the Value

Summarize key discussions, best practices, and innovative ideas that can benefit your department and organization.

By promoting your experience, you reinforce the importance of professional development and make a strong case for continued participation in future conferences.

Email Template

Hi [Manager Name],

Registration is now open for NIGP Forum 2026, and I'm interested in attending on behalf of [organization name]. I would like to get your approval to attend the experience which will be held [in-person in Columbus, OH / virtually from August 23 – 26, 2026].

NIGP Forum is the largest conference focused strictly on public procurement, and it's the premier event for our industry. By attending, not only will I be learning from the biggest thought leaders in the profession, but I'll also increase my network of procurement peers, and I'll meet key suppliers who cater to our market.

Below are some of the sessions I plan to attend that will be the most impactful to me and my role [feel free to also attach schedule at-a-glance].

- **Session 1:** Insert the name of the session here
- **Session 2:** Insert the name of the session here
- **Session 3:** Insert the name of the session here

For your convenience, I have included a breakdown of how much it will cost for me to attend NIGP Forum this year.

Registration Fee:	**$**
Airfare/Travel Fee:	**$**
Hotel Fees:	**$**
Additional Expenses:	**$**
Early Registration Savings/Promotions/Scholarships:	**$**
Total Forecasted Costs: [Calculate Total Cost]	**$**
Included in Registration: [List what is included with registration]	
Contact Hours:	

To ensure this experience benefits our entire team, I can prepare a brief write-up or presentation after attending the conference to share what I have learned with everyone else. I can also create an action plan that incorporates the tools, resources, and strategies I discover for others to use as well.

If you want to learn more about NIGP Forum 2026, visit here. Thank you for taking the time to review this request, and I look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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