



Convention Director Job Description

Overview

NDSC's signature event for the past 52 years has been its Annual Convention. Our next one will be in Dallas, July 24th – 27th, 2025. The Convention brings together approximately 4,000 families, medical professionals, educators, therapists, researchers, caregivers, siblings, and more from around the country and even the world. The Convention consists of general workshops, a Youth & Adults Conference, a Siblings Conference, a Kids Camp, an Advocacy Policy Boot Camp, a Medical Interest Group Conference, an Educators Conference, an Exhibit Hall, a College Fair, and so much more!

The Convention Director position is a full-time exempt role as the Convention is a year-round planning endeavor. The person in this role must be a proven collaborative leader with exceptional attention to detail, multitasking skills, and experience planning major events and/or conferences. In addition, because this person will work with so many vendors, partners, and other NDSC stakeholders, they must have a high level of emotional intelligence, which is essential to doing the job well.

1. Character and Personal Growth Attributes for All

- Respect for others, commitment to quality, integrity, self-motivation, and a positive attitude.
- Relationally, work well with others, resolve conflicts, and be trustworthy.
- Be an aggressive learner who consistently tries to grow in knowledge and competencies.
- Be a contributing member of a healthy staff culture as we collectively strive to fulfill NDSC's mission and vision.

2. NDSC Staff Responsibilities

- The Convention Director reports directly to the Executive Director.
- Submit a monthly staff report and expense report.
- Perform other responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director.

3. Event Planning

- Balancing the big-picture perspective of managing a convention with an exceptional ability to multitask, problem-solve, make sound decisions, and pay attention to details is critical to success in this role.
- Here are some of the critical components that are related to event planning.
 - Creating the schedule(s).
 - Making room assignments for all the various meetings and events tied to the Convention.
 - Overseeing the plan for managing registrations in the spring and during the Convention.

- Make the meal and beverage arrangements that are needed for meetings, events, or receptions, including the Meal Plans people can pay for and the Awards Banquet.
- Work with the Convention Leadership Team and others to secure special speakers or entertainment for our more significant functions. Take the point on communicating with them on any of their travel, reimbursement, or other needs.
- After the workshop speakers are selected, be responsible for communicating with them about registration details, AV, and any other logistical needs.
- After sponsors are secured, work with the Communications Coordinator to fulfill all sponsor benefits.
- Communicate with local affiliate leaders and other essential host city volunteers on how they can help support the Convention and then equip them to do so.
- Organize the Exhibit Hall. Although many people will be involved with securing exhibitors, the Convention Director will secure the space, plan who goes where in the Exhibit Hall, and communicate with exhibitors about their needs.

4. Supervisory Role

- Be the direct supervisor for the following seasonal convention positions:
 - Youth & Adult Conference Coordinator
 - Kids Camp Coordinator
 - Convention Volunteer Coordinator
 - Registration Lead
- Meet with each of them one-on-one, either weekly or bi-weekly, for Check-In meetings and review their Monthly Reports.
- Keep the Executive Director informed on any issues with members of the Convention Team and projects the team is working on.

5. Collaboration

- The Convention Director serves on the Convention Leadership Team with the Convention Co-Chairs, Board President, and Executive Director. This group meets regularly throughout the year - consistent and clear communication with this team is critical.
- The Convention Director doesn't lead all of these Convention Teams (or subcommittees) but regularly interacts with each team and, at times, works with them to execute plans and problem-solve. Here are our current Convention Teams.
 - Local Affiliates
 - Youth & Adult Conference
 - Kids Camp
 - Multicultural
 - Policy & Advocacy
 - Sponsorships
 - Speaker Selection
 - Awards
 - Siblings Conference
 - Banquet

- Work with the consultants at Helms Briscoe and the Convention Leadership Team on future Convention site selections. We want to be in the rhythm of looking two and three years out. Helms Briscoe helps sift through site options and assists with hotel negotiations.
- Once a site has been selected, the Convention Director is the primary point of contact with the hotels and their various department leads.
- Work closely with the Communications Coordinator on all print, signage, website, social media, email blasts, and other communication needs and projects throughout the planning cycle.

6. Vendor Relationships

- Be the main point of contact with the following vendors:
 - Convention Site Hotel and Conference Center
 - Helms Briscoe
 - Image AV
 - Event Registration / Management Software Platform (we are in the process of making this selection for 2025)
 - Playback Now
 - UniVerse Language Solutions
 - Gallagher Videography
- Develop vendor relationships in the host cities for printing, storage, and any other local needs that arise.
- Coordinate with major event speakers, entertainers, or other performers/instructors who will add value to the Convention experience for our various participants.
- Communicate with the Executive Director and Convention Leadership Team on any vendor issues they need to be aware of.

7. Financial Oversight

- In the fall, collaborate with the Executive Director, NDSC bookkeeper, and Convention Planning Team to create the expense budget and revenue targets for the upcoming Convention.
- Monitor spending throughout the year to stay within the parameters of the Convention budget.

8. Reviews & Convention Evaluation

- All new employees receive an initial performance appraisal upon completing their first 90 days of employment.
- To provide our staff with consistent feedback and create an ongoing dialogue about priorities, performance challenges, and ways they can feel supported and empowered, every staff member fills out a monthly report they submit to their supervisor. Part of this report outlines their top three to five work priorities on a rolling basis for the upcoming 90 days. They will also outline the progress made on their current monthly priorities.
- Along with the monthly report, every staff member and supervisor will have regular (at least monthly) Check-In meetings. A significant part of these meetings will include being informed of and progressing towards their priorities for the next 90 days.

Qualifications

- Proven track record in initiation, problem-solving, attention to detail, empowering others, and multitasking.
- A high degree of emotional intelligence to work with a wide range of people.
- Strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication and organizational skills are essential for this position.
- Humble and teachable spirit with a desire to consistently improve their work.
- Computer competency in Microsoft Office Suite products and experience with databases.
- Familiarity with Convention Management software platforms is preferable.
- Must have a valid driver's license, reliable automobile, and appropriate insurance coverage.
- A four-year degree is required.
- This is a full-time, exempt position. There will be an ebb and flow of hours during the year, with occasional evenings and weekends. There can be some flexibility regarding exact days and times, but a good portion of the time needs to be during typical office hours. This is a remote position, requiring travel a few times a year.