



## EVENT CHECKLIST

Follow this event checklist when planning your next ACS event. It covers a number of issues that may or may not apply to any given program's planning, and is intended to provide a soup-to-nuts overview so that even the least experienced planner can host an event with confidence. When in doubt, please do not hesitate to contact ACS Lawyer Chapter staff at [LCEmails@ACSLaw.org](mailto:LCEmails@ACSLaw.org). We are always happy to talk through program or speaker ideas, logistics, or any other issues that may arise.

### **Putting Together a Program:**

- Select a Topic and/or Speaker for your event. You may consider using an ACS Program Guide, hot topics in your community, or confer with ACS staff, or your fellow board members.
  - Once you have selected a topic, determine potential speakers.
    - ✦ Diversity and inclusion are priorities when selecting speakers. This means understanding and valuing the characteristics and beliefs of people from a wide range of communities while ensuring their participation, including people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, gender, physical abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, religious and spiritual values, and national origin. Diversity within the scope of ACS's mission also means reaching out and including a broad array of lawyers in your chapter who work across the various fields of the legal profession, including government, in-house, law firm and public interest attorneys, law professors, judges, and grassroots activists.
  - If you would like to invite a speaker who would need travel funding, seek funding approval first from ACS National.

- Invite your selected speakers. Remember ACS policies and guidelines prohibit the taking of a position on policies. It is ACS's policy that: **ACS and its affiliates, including student and lawyer chapters, do not, as an organization, lobby, litigate or take positions on specific issues, cases, legislation or nominations.**
- Consider co-sponsors for the event. There may be a natural fit for the program topic, so don't hesitate to engage more members of your local community, such as diversity-based bar groups, the local ACLU, National Lawyers Guild, Trial Lawyers' Bar, or other organizations. Please also reach out to other ACS chapters.
- Correspond with or schedule a conference call with cosponsors to discuss roles. Roles can vary – you may have a program completely finalized and you just want the other organization to promote the event to their email list, or you may want them to handle CLE credit, secure a speaker, provide funding, or perhaps serve as an introducer.
- Confirm speaker(s)
- If you requested funds for the speaker, after receiving approval, notify the speaker of the amount that they will be reimbursed for and provide the [reimbursement form](#).
  - Again, think about the diversity of panelists and voices represented.
  - If appropriate, select a moderator for the event. You may want to ask one of the speakers (if there are more than two), a board member, or a local professor.
  - Have speakers sign the [ACS Speaker Release Form](#).
  - Schedule a conference call with panelists (and moderator) to review event flow and roles a week before the event. Be sure to tell the speakers in advance how much time they each have to speak if it is a panel discussion with introductory comments (rather than solely answering questions). It's important that the moderator commits to inviting questions from the audience with at least 15-20 minutes to go, so those from the audience can participate in the discussion as well.
- Select and confirm introducer. Make sure it is not always the same person; consider various leaders in the chapter, someone from the Student Chapter if it is being held at a law school, a board of advisors member, or leader in the firm/organization hosting the event. (The latter can be especially helpful in

encouraging turnout from the hosting firm or organization if the introducer is included in publicity emails).

Virtual Events

- The information below is only applicable for in-person gatherings. Many of our chapters are now hosting virtual events as well. For particular guidance on how to host an event on Zoom, please review the information we have compiled at this link: <https://www.acslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Zoom-Guidance-for-LCs.pdf>
- Fall 2020: We are advising that chapter events be planned virtually through the fall. Given the uncertainty and the lack of safety surrounding in-person events at this time, we are also halting funding and reimbursements for event and travel costs. As you are organizing events, if there are anticipated costs, please reach out to your ACS national liaison to further discuss.

In-Person Events

Room selection/location

- Reserve a room large enough to accommodate expected attendance, but small enough for the room to appear full.
- Get parking passes for speakers & provide parking information in advance.
- Make sure the room setup is workable.

Multimedia, Audio/Visual, if applicable

- Let the event site know of microphone requirements.
- Let the event site know of any specific seating arrangement and number of seats required.

Food

- Can this be a brown-bag event?
- Seek budget approval from National in advance if you require funds for the event. Requests for funds must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the event.
- Make food arrangements sufficiently in advance and determine deadline for final numbers (can number be adjusted up or down?).
- Provide vegetarian options (at least 10% as a rule of thumb).

- Avoid allergy-prone food items, such as nuts.
- Consider whether to offer CLE. Refer to the information [here](#).
- Submit the event information to [LCEmails@ACSLaw.org](mailto:LCEmails@ACSLaw.org). Be sure to include all of the relevant information in one email:
- date,
  - start and end time,
  - place (including full address and room number),
  - event title,
  - event description
  - speaker name(s) and title(s),
  - speaker photo,
  - any cosponsors,
  - any CLE information, and
  - any other relevant information.
  - To utilize ACS National's Zoom accounts, please refer to [this document](#).
  - *Please remember that Lawyer Chapter emails are never sent on Fridays and are generally not sent on Mondays. To ensure that the email goes out beginning when you would like, please submit all information no later than the Tuesday of the preceding week. Same day and even next day emails are often not possible due to other obligations or other scheduled emails. **Please plan ahead.***
  - In addition to creating and sending out an email to all contacts (members and non-members) in your area, we will set up an RSVP page.
- Post the event to your chapter's Facebook page.
- *Please refer followers to the ACS-provided RSVP page as opposed to collecting separate RSVPs on Facebook. This will ensure that all event RSVPs are properly received and managed.*
- Spreading the Word
- Be creative about other ways to spread the word.
    - ✦ Bar section listservs
    - ✦ Twitter, Instagram, other social media
    - ✦ Cosponsors' email lists

- ✦ Op-ed in the local paper (see ACS Communications staff for assistance).
- ✦ If you think your event might be of interest to a national audience, discuss with your ACS contact whether and how ACS can elevate your event.

Volunteers

- Recruit one or more people to work the check-in table, greet attendees, greet the speakers, etc. This can be a great way to involve Student Chapter representatives.

Confirm you have adequate ACS supplies on hand (membership brochures, ACS one pager) at least a week in advance of event.

**Bring to the Event:**

[Speaker release forms](#) (if not signed prior to the event).

ACS chapter banner; binder clips and table skirt clips seem to work best to secure the banner.

ACS materials:

- Sign in sheet (modify the [Sample Event Sign-in Sheet](#) for your event).
- RSVP list – available by requesting from the Chapter Fellow or emailing [LCEmails@ACSLaw.org](mailto:LCEmails@ACSLaw.org). If people have RSVP'd and are on your list, unless you are offering CLE, they need not sign in – they can check themselves off the list or the volunteer can check them off the list, saving time at the check in desk.
- [ACS One-pager](#)
- If you have other events coming up, have a flier with information on the next events.
- CLE sign in sheet for attorneys only, if relevant.

Other supplies:

- Water for speakers.
- Name tents for speakers and moderator if you are having a panel.
- Pens for sign in table.

Contact information for all relevant people

- Caterer, prearrange the time for food delivery or pick-up.
- Speaker(s).
- On-site contact.

Camera

- Take pictures of event and Speaker(s), assign one or two volunteers to this task
  - ✦ Note: *Remember to make sure that the front of the room is full of attendees – it makes for a better picture!*

**At the Event:**

Set-up

- Arrive early enough so that everything is set up before speakers and guests arrive. This may be their first impression of ACS; minimize the chaos.
- Select someone to meet the speakers. Designate a time and location to meet each speaker. Get a parking pass in advance for the speaker if applicable but if parking will need to be paid by the speaker, provide all information to the speakers ahead of time to minimize their efforts.
- Place the registration table where attendees *must* walk by it.
  - ✦ Have the email sign-up sheet ready and available for those who did not RSVP. (You can download a sample [here](#)).
  - ✦ Have the [ACS One-pager](#) out for distribution.
  - ✦ If you have other events coming up, have a flier with information on the next events.
  - ✦ Put out the CLE sign in sheet for attorneys only, if relevant. *In many states, it is very important that only attorneys seeking your state's CLE credit sign the sign in sheet.*
- If applicable, set the food up far enough away from registration desk to avoid bottlenecks.
- Membership/Outreach chair(s) should be nearby to answer membership questions and to encourage new members/renewals.
  - ✦ If possible, set up a laptop with the ACS membership page prominently displayed and encourage attendees to sign up there or to complete a one-pager.
- Make sure there are enough trash bins both inside and outside the room.

- Clearly mark the room and display signage directing people from the entrance to the room.
  - Run a test of the A/V equipment, if applicable.
- Introducer should welcome the audience. They should:
- Thank the audience for attending.
  - Thank host, cosponsors, organizers, and volunteers.
  - Recognize any judges, professors, deans, or VIPs in attendance.
  - Identify chapter leaders and ask attendees to speak with them in order to become more involved with ACS.
  - Ask attendees to join ACS, explain membership benefits and provide them with a way to join.
  - Plug upcoming events.
  - Plug Chapter social media page(s), if applicable.
  - Briefly share information about ACS and why they are a member, or they can read a statement about the mission of ACS at the beginning of the program: **“For those not familiar with us, the American Constitution Society is the nation’s largest progressive legal network. ACS believes that the Constitution is “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” We interpret the Constitution based on its text and against the backdrop of history and lived experience. Through a diverse nationwide network of progressive lawyers, law students, judges, scholars and many others, we work to uphold the Constitution in the 21st Century by ensuring that law is a force for protecting our democracy and the public interest, and for improving people’s lives. If you support these efforts and are not a formal part of our network, I encourage you to visit [acslaw.org](http://acslaw.org) and become a member of ACS today.”**
- Introducer should then introduce the speakers. For a panel discussion, the introducer should determine in advance whether they will introduce the moderator who will then introduce the other panelists, or whether the introducer is to introduce both the moderator and the panelists.
- Volunteers
- Determine where the bathrooms are so they are prepared when asked.

- If you have enough volunteers, send someone to the building entrance to greet and direct attendees.
- Determine how to conclude the event
    - Will the organizer stand up and say there is time for one more question at a predetermined time? What is the agreed upon time to do so?
    - Will the moderator look for a signal from the organizer? (Consider having a timekeeper with timecards).
  - Assertively end the program on time
    - Encourage people with more questions to stay afterward if the speakers have time.
  - Make sure the introducer, moderator, or a chapter leader concludes the program and:
    - Thanks the audience for attending,
    - Thanks host, cosponsors, organizers and volunteers,
    - Reminds guests of upcoming events.
  - Have chapter leaders or volunteers at the door to thank attendees, point out trash cans/bathrooms if necessary.

### **Follow-up:**

- Clean up, if necessary.
- Send thank you letters to speaker(s).
- Send pictures of the event to [LCEmails@ACSLaw.org](mailto:LCEmails@ACSLaw.org).
- If necessary, submit Lawyer Chapters reimbursement form with attached receipts/invoices ([accountspayable@acslaw.org](mailto:accountspayable@acslaw.org)).
- Where appropriate, draft a follow-up email to your chapter recounting the details of the event.
- Where appropriate, draft a summary of the event to be published as a blog post on ACSLaw.org. (This is a great task for a less-involved board member as it only requires attending the event and drafting and submitting a summary. Summaries must be submitted within two weeks of an event).



- Send an email to the new people who signed up welcoming them and inviting them to plan and attend future meetings.
- Scan and email sign-in sheets to [LCEMails@ACSLaw.org](mailto:LCEMails@ACSLaw.org) as soon as possible so they can be added to your email list.
- Handle any CLE issues.

***Please remember that all documents for events that include the ACS logo should be sent to National for review prior to printing for event.***