



———— **NATIONAL ANIMAL** ————  
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

**A GETTING-STARTED GUIDE**

# **How to Plan a State Level Animal Control Officer Conference**

---

*A simple starting point for first-time conference organizers — built for a small state conference (roughly 50–150 attendees), with ready-to-use templates included.*

Includes: Planning Timeline • Sample 2-Day Agenda • Sample Sponsorship Prospectus

## How to Use This Guide

---

If you've just been told you're in charge of putting together your state's animal control officer conference, welcome, and don't panic. This guide is meant to be a simple starting point, not a comprehensive event-planning manual. It walks through the basic building blocks in order and includes two ready-to-use templates (a sample agenda and a sample sponsorship prospectus) that you can copy, fill in, and send out right away.

This guide assumes a small state-level conference: roughly 50–150 attendees, 1–2 days, at a hotel or conference center. If your event is bigger or smaller, the same basic steps still apply, just scale the numbers up or down.

**Tip:** *You don't have to do this alone. Most state associations have at least one or two people who've helped run a past conference — ask around before you start from scratch.*

### SECTION 1

## Build Your Timeline First

---

Before anything else, work backward from your date of events and block out when major decisions need to be made. Most of conference planning is just sequencing, doing the right things in the right order so nothing gets stuck waiting on something else.

Timeframe	What to Lock Down
9–12 months out	Set the date, confirm budget approval, choose and book your venue
6–9 months out	Open sponsorship outreach, start building your agenda/speaker list, set registration pricing
4–6 months out	Open registration, confirm speakers, finalize sponsorship commitments, book catering/AV
2–3 months out	Send save-the-date reminders, finalize agenda, confirm room blocks, order signage/materials
3–6 weeks out	Send final attendee details (parking, schedule, what to bring), confirm headcounts with venue/caterer
1–2 weeks out	Print materials, prep name badges, confirm AV/tech needs, brief any volunteers or staff
Day of / day after	Run the event, then send thank-you notes to sponsors and speakers within a week

**Tip:** *If you only remember one rule: lock the venue and date first. Almost everything else (sponsorship asks, speaker invites, registration) depends on having a confirmed date and place.*

## SECTION 2

# Set a Basic Budget

---

You don't need a finance background for this — you need a simple list of what's coming in and what's going out. Common line items for a small state conference:

### Typical Costs

- Venue rental (room fees, AV equipment, parking)
- Food & beverage (often the single biggest cost — ask about per-person catering minimums early)
- Speaker costs (travel, lodging, honorariums if applicable)
- Printed materials (agendas, name badges, signage)
- Marketing (website updates, email platform, printing/postage)
- Contingency (aim for 10–15% buffer — something always comes up)

### Typical Revenue

- Registration fees
- Sponsorships (see Section 4 — this can cover a meaningful share of your costs)
- Exhibitor/vendor table fees

**Tip:** Ask your venue about food & beverage minimums before you sign anything before you sign up. This is the cost that most often surprises first-time organizers.

## SECTION 3

# Thisse Your Venue

---

For a 50–150-person conference, you're typically looking at a hotel conference center, a community college event space, or a government/civic conference room. A few things to ask every venue before booking:

- What's the room capacity, and does that change with different seating setups (classroom vs. theater vs. rounds)?
- Is there a food & beverage minimum, and what's included for free (water service, screens, podiums)?
- Is there a discounted hotel room block available for out-of-town attendees?
- What's the cancellation/rebooking policy if your numbers change?
- Is Wi-Fi included, and is it reliable enough for any virtual/hybrid speakers?
- Is there space set aside for sponsor/exhibitor tables?

## SECTION 4

# Line Up Sponsors Early

---

Sponsorship dollars can meaningfully offset your costs, but outreach takes longer than people expect — most organizations need 4–8 weeks just to get budget approval internally. Start this early.

## Who to Ask

- Animal-related product and service vendors (microchip companies, pet food brands, equipment suppliers)
- Local veterinary clinics and animal hospitals
- Shelter software and technology providers
- State or regional animal welfare organizations and foundations
- Local businesses that want visibility with this audience (uniform suppliers, vehicle/fleet companies)

A ready-to-use sponsorship prospectus template is included in Appendix B — just add your conference name, dates, and pricing.

## SECTION 5

# Build Your Agenda

---

A simple, well-paced agenda matters more than a packed one. For a small 1–2-day conference, a good rule of thumb is 4–6 sessions per day, with real breaks in between, attendees retain more from fewer, better sessions than from a jam-packed schedule.

- Open with something energizing (a keynote or a state-of-the-field update)
- Mix session types: lecture-style, hands-on/skills-based, and panel discussions
- Build in real breaks — 15 minutes minimum between sessions, a full hour for lunch
- Leave room for a vendor/sponsor showcase, even if it's just during breaks and lunch
- Close with something memorable — awards, a networking reception, or a forward-looking session

A ready-to-use sample 2-day agenda is included in Appendix A — copy it, adjust the topics and times to fit your event, and you have a working draft in minutes.

## SECTION 6

# Promote Registration

---

You don't need a complicated marketing plan — just consistent, repeated reminders across a few channels.

- Email your state association's existing contact list (this is usually your highest-converting channel)
- Post to your state association's website and social media accounts
- Ask shelter directors and animal control supervisors to forward the registration link to their staff
- Send at least 3 reminder touches: save-the-date, “registration is open,” and a final “last chance” reminder 2–3 weeks before the event

**Tip:** *Early-bird pricing (a discount for registering by a certain date) is a simple, proven way to get people to commit early instead of waiting until the last minute.*

## SECTION 7

# Day-Of Essentials

---

- Arrive early enough to check the room setup, signage, and AV before attendees arrive
- Have a simple check-in table with printed name badges sorted alphabetically
- Assign one person as the point of contact for any on-site issues (so it isn't you trying to also run sessions)
- Have a few printed copies of the agenda available, even if you sent it digitally
- Send a short thank-you (and feedback survey, if you want one) within a few days of the event

## Appendix A

# Sample 2-Day Conference Agenda

---

### Day 1 [Month Day, Year]

Time	Session
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Registration & Check-In   Coffee & Light Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Welcome & Opening Remarks [Name/Title]
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Opening Keynote: [Topic] — [Speaker Name]
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Break   Visit Sponsor Tables
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Session: [Topic, e.g., “Handling & De-escalation Techniques”]
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Session: [Topic, e.g., “Legal Updates for Animal Control”]
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch   Sponsor Showcase
1:30 – 2:30 PM	Session: [Topic, e.g., “Community Cat Programs”]
2:30 – 2:45 PM	Break   Visit Sponsor Tables
2:45 – 3:45 PM	Panel Discussion: [Topic] __Panelist Names]
3:45 – 4:00 PM	Day 1 Wrap-Up & Announcements
6:00 – 8:00 PM	Optional: Welcome Reception / Networking

### Day 2 [Month Day, Year]

Time	Session
8:00 – 8:30 AM	Coffee & Light Breakfast
8:30 – 9:30 AM	Session: [Topic, e.g., “Emergency & Disaster Response Basics”]
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Session: [Topic, e.g., “Officer Wellness & Burnout Prevention”]
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break   Visit Sponsor Tables
10:45 – 11:45 AM	Hands-On Workshop: [Topic, e.g., “Equipment & Capture Techniques”]
11:45 AM – 12:45 PM	Lunch   Sponsor Prize Drawings
12:45 – 1:45 PM	Session: [Topic, e.g., “Building Community Partnerships”]
1:45 – 2:30 PM	Closing Keynote / State Association Update
2:30 – 3:00 PM	Awards & Recognitions
3:00 PM	Closing Remarks & Safe Travels

**Tip:** Keep at least one open networking block (a reception, an extended lunch) informal connection time is consistently rated as one of the most valuable parts of a conference by attendees.

## Appendix B

# Sample Sponsorship Prospectus

---

Copy this into your own document, fill in your conference details and pricing, and you have a sponsorship packet ready to send. The tier structure below is a starting point — adjust pricing and benefits to fit your event size and local market.

## [Your State] Animal Control Officer Conference

[Month Day–Day, Year] • [Venue Name, City, State] • Expected Attendance: [50–150] Animal Control Officers, Shelter Staff, and Industry Professionals

### Why Sponsor This Conference?

- Direct access to [expected attendance] animal control and animal welfare professionals from across the state
- Position your organization as a supporter of the people doing this critical work
- Brand visibility through signage, printed materials, and verbal recognition
- Face-to-face time with decision-makers and end-users of your products or services

### Sponsorship Levels

Level	Investment	Benefits
Presenting Sponsor	[\$2,500+]	Exclusive top-tier recognition, logo on all materials, 10-min speaking slot, premium exhibit table, 2 free registrations
Gold Sponsor	[\$1,000–\$2,499]	Logo on agenda & signage, exhibit table, verbal recognition, 1 free registration
Silver Sponsor	[\$500–\$999]	Logo on agenda, exhibit table, verbal recognition
Bronze Sponsor	[\$250–\$499]	Name listed on agenda and conference signage
Exhibitor Table Only	[\$100–\$250]	Exhibit table for the full conference (no other benefits included)

### Other Ways to Support

- In-kind donations (raffle/door prizes, printed materials, meals)
- Scholarship sponsorship (cover registration cost for an officer who couldn't otherwise attend)

### Next Steps

To confirm your sponsorship, please contact:

**[Your Name] | [Title] | [Email] | [Phone]**

Sponsorship commitments are requested by [date] to guarantee inclusion on printed materials.