

## WRJ Pacific District Area Event Planning Guide

**Purpose:** To gather local sisterhood women for a day of study, worship, camaraderie, and communication. To provide an example of what a larger District event, or WRJ event would be like.

**Planning an Area Event...** Pacific District VPs with assistance from other Pacific District Officers are the primary contacts with overall responsibilities. Area Directors will also have specific responsibilities for Area Events.

The VPs and (in conjunction with officers) in each area, as appropriate, will:

1. Establish a host sisterhood for Area Event by January. Try to alternate host sisterhoods.
2. Set a date for the Area Event. Some dates are preset and occur on specific Sundays in June and July. During convention years, earlier dates may work out better.
3. Hold a planning conference call or local meeting in January and invite all sisterhood presidents and past district presidents, WRJ PD Board Members and WRJ Directors/Board Members in your area to participate.

***The goals of the meeting/call are:***

*To develop a plan for the day, including a theme based on the Torah portion for the coming week or other concepts. The WRJ website offers additional ideas and suggestions.*

*To determine the format for the program and costs (budget development).*

*To gather ideas for workshops and entire group gatherings.*

*To identify potential presenters.*

*To assign responsibilities: Publicity, Workshops, Food (normally planned by host sisterhood), Budget, Information folders, Registration, Hotels, and Saturday night dinner, if applicable.*

**Next steps:**

- Begin publicity with a “ Save the Date” *flyer by early February* to post on the PD website, to e-mail in the Tuesday Chai Line, and to email to all area sisterhoods (S CA should invite Southwest Area sisterhoods, personally) (after approval by District President).
- Post the registration form and program on the district website via the webmaster or the PD VP Marketing & Communications, and also e-mail district-wide at least eight weeks prior to the Area Event.

- Remind Area Directors to request that sisterhood presidents e-mail the registration forms and schedule to their members. And, if a new president will be taking office in July, the current president should be certain that the incoming president and officers receive the information and are encouraged to participate.

**Suggestions:** Send registration invitations and registration forms to all of last year's attendees for whom you have e-mail addresses. PD exec board, committee chairs, WRJ board members, and past presidents should be included in all aspects of Area Events. Pacific District VP for Marketing & Communications and the Corresponding Secretary can assist with this.

Send a cover letter, invitation and registration form to all URJ affiliated, as appropriate, synagogues in the region that do not have a sisterhood and invite their women. Work with the District Affiliations Chair and committee to ensure personal contacts with potential affiliates.

**Other tasks to be assigned:**

- a) Opening prayer/greeting/introduction of guests
- b) Ice-breaker (optional)
- c) Hamotzi at lunch
- d) Birkat ha'mazon
- e) Closing circle
- f) Create evaluation form; assign someone to distribute and collect; tally and report—should be an area director or officer.
- g) May sell other items, such as Pacific District pins. Assign the responsibility to manage the sales and collect money. All monies collected should be sent to the District Treasurer.
- h) Coordinate the transportation for speakers
- i) Raffle item—if applicable

Try to involve participants in activities, songs, discussions that they can take back to their own sisterhoods and use. Make everyone feel welcome and promote interaction.

**Delegate responsibilities.**

4. Contact WRJ to request your WRJ Guest Speaker, if appropriate, for your Area Event. (Items 1-4 should occur in January – It is better to get the initial plan in place as well as begin the process to request a guest by January to have the most flexibility.) The PD officer or WRJ speaker will be responsible for the YES Fund presentation. Include the hotel room, all meal costs and reimbursement for copying and handouts for a WRJ guest or other speaker in your Area Event budget along with gifts for special guests and speakers.
5. As invited keynote speakers are your guests, the cost of their registration, meals, copying and any other expenses should be factored into your budget.

6. Pacific District does not pay speakers and presenters for Area Events. Most presenters are local leaders from our WRJ Board or Pacific District or members of sisterhoods.
7. Check WRJ's Speakers Bureau guidelines. WRJ Service to Sisterhoods staff are available to assist.
8. Provide a copy of the names of women who signed up for each workshop to the presenters either before or on the day of their workshops.
9. List those who have paid for any workshop for which there is an additional fee (i.e. crafts). Anyone not paid or wanting to pay prior to the workshop will not be allowed to participate. This will have to be clear on the registration form.

**Pre-Area Event Training:**

10. Area Events should include a **leadership training** session on the Saturday before Area Event, whenever feasible. The District President and 1<sup>st</sup> VP will coordinate topics and schedule with the WRJ guest or other speaker
11. This is an appropriate opportunity to invite any other guest speakers such as a speaker on women's issues or interests. Guests may also be rabbis, cantors, educators, or WRJ officers.
12. a) The WRJ PD President and/or 1st VP should be included in all communications and meetings.  
  
b) Remember that the costs for the Saturday speaker and training must be built into the Area Event registration. Typically, this extra training will target current and future leaders.
13. a) **Save the date** publicity should be distributed as soon as the date is set.  
b) Registration information should be emailed 8 weeks before each Area Event. c) Workshops and presenters must be set by early April, ideally.
14. a) **The host sisterhood** arranges for the food and beverages. This expense is part of the budget for the day and is factored into the price of registration.  
b) Food may include a light breakfast (with coffee and juice and lunch with iced tea or water.) Ask other sisterhoods to possibly contribute the dessert and snacks which will cut down on catering costs.  
c) Please remember to include custodial costs.  
d) This sisterhood also should arrange for the use of a microphone or lectern, if needed, and any other A/V needs and coordinate room or area usage for whole group and break-out sessions.  
e) Host synagogue/venue should have adequate space for all participants to be together for meals and presentations (social hall and/or sanctuary,

workshop rooms that can be set up with tables and chairs in a rectangle/square or circle, conveniently located lavatories, and easy access to spaces allocated to the Area Event, and flexibility regarding catering and food.

15. Materials list from WRJ to be shipped or picked up by the sisterhood/person that is preparing the Area Event folders. (WRJ board meeting is convenient for picking up materials rather than paying shipping charges.) It may be less costly to order one copy of some WRJ items and copy them locally using two sides of a sheet of paper. This materials list should first be submitted to the District President or 1<sup>st</sup> VP prior to ordering. Any WRJ materials cost and shipping should be factored into the Area Event budget.
16. Maintain contact with each person in a key role. Two or more conference calls or meetings are necessary to finalize the agenda and logistics. Keep your PD President and First VP in the loop and provide opportunity for input frequently.
17. Include a short PD convention update and relevant WRJ events updates at some time during the day. Either the convention co-chair, PD president or 1<sup>st</sup> VP will do the presentation.
18. Budget should include food, drinks, snacks, folders, handouts, other materials, costs for special speakers, gifts for host sisterhood coordinator and clergy. Submit receipts with vouchers (on PD website under Resources) to the District President for approval within thirty days of the event. She will ensure that the District Treasurer receives the vouchers and receipts.
19. Write thank you notes. Involve the area directors.
20. Schedule a wrap up meeting after Area Event.

### **Developing & Managing Your Budget:**

- All registration fees are sent to the district treasurer
- Assign a planning committee member to collect and mail the collected YES Fund cards and checks to WRJ

**Enjoy the Area Event and the opportunity to study, worship, and communicate. We are Stronger Together!**

*December 30, 2012*