

National AACTFest Host Manual
The Have-to's and How-to's of Producing the
National AACTFest
2013 Cycle

aact
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

Festival Commission
American Association of Community Theatre

National AACTFest Host Manual 2013

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The organization selected to host the national AACTFest will be required to sign a letter of agreement with AACT specifying the responsibilities of each party and confirming that the host will follow all festival rules, procedures and timetables set forth in this document and the *AACTFest Handbook*. In case of any conflict between documents, the *AACTFest Handbook* for the 2013 cycle will prevail.

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Overview and National Applicant Timeline

The National Host Manual is intended to provide an overview of elements inherent to any theatre festival, but especially AACT's biennial National Festival typically held in June of odd numbered years.

There is no substitute for asking questions about the host selection process or the intricacies of producing the National Festival.

The Festival Commission Chair and Field Services Director are charged with making your application to Host and your festival, if you are selected to host, the *best* they can possibly be. The process/time line for selection of the 2013 Host is as follows:

- March 2010 AACT solicits host applicants
- July 31, 2010 Deadline for receipt by the AACT office of a non-binding letter of application to host.
- October 1, 2010 Deadline for receipt of applicants' preliminary proposals. See Applicant Proposal Checklist for required contents.
- October 2010 Applicants' preliminary proposals are reviewed by AACT's Executive Committee.
- January 5, 2011 Deadline for receipt by AACT of final proposals.

Note: To this point the process is non-competitive. All input, formal and informal, is intended to make each proposal complete and the best it can be.

- Early February, 2011 Each applicant formally presents its proposal to the AACT Board and Festival Commission during the Winter Board meeting. Typically, but not always, a selection is made immediately.
- Spring, 2011 Contracts with the Festival Host and National Adjudicators will be completed. (See National Host Contract section, page 4.)

Applicant Proposal Checklist

Organize proposal in this order so that those reviewing it can easily find answers to their questions.

1. Proposed festival host, dates, and city
2. List of any co-hosts/co-sponsors
3. A narrative explaining why the applicant wants to host a national AACTFest
4. Proposed Festival Chair(s) and leadership team
5. Details of any prior festival experience (hosting, entering, other)
6. Number and sources of proposed volunteers
7. Specifics about the proposed theatre space including relationship to or agreement with applicant, seating capacity, stage size and type, set storage capabilities, lighting equipment, sound equipment, offstage facilities, handicapped accessibility, and staff (paid and/or volunteer)
8. Descriptions of all spaces for the workshops, and the AACT Board, committee and Membership meetings
9. Specifics regarding proposed housing, including location(s) and costs
10. Description of air and ground transportation to the city and ground transportation within the city
11. Preliminary schedule summary
12. Preliminary budget formatted per the budget worksheet (Excel file available) and including proposed registration fee
13. Organizational chart for the festival showing leadership positions and committees
14. Floor plans of all facilities that will be utilized for the festival
15. City map with all pertinent locations marked
16. Brief history of the applicant
17. Evidence of the applicant's stability in the community
18. Evidence of local government (city, county, state, other) support
19. A statement regarding the relationship of the applicant with state and local arts commissions/councils (For example, is support available and is the organization in good standing with all of the applicable commissions?)
20. List of the applicant's board of directors
21. Copy of the host organization's 501(c)(3) letter of determination
22. Copy of applicant's AACT organizational membership certificate
23. To be added for February presentation: A video and/or PowerPoint® presentation showing the interiors and exteriors of the facilities

National Host Contract

The contract between the Host Organization and AACT will include, but not be limited to the following:

- Agreed festival dates
- Agreed facility locations
- Host Fees and payment dates
- Timeline for various responsibilities
- Insurance requirements
- AACT room and registration needs
- AACT meetings
- Workshops
- Silent auction, Endowment event, and other AACT Endowment support
- Reporting required including dates

The National Adjudicators are selected and paid an honorarium by AACT. Adjudicator expenses, including the Alternate Adjudicator, such as travel and housing are the responsibility of the National Host. AACT will sign a contract with each Adjudicator including the Alternate Adjudicator.

Partnering

(The following is reprinted from the February 2003 issue of Spotlight.)

You have always wanted to host a Festival but due to space restrictions, financial concerns, lack of volunteers, etc., you have never considered it possible.

There is no reason any theatre should be denied the experience of hosting a festival. Give some thought to partnering with another theatre, arts council, convention bureau, or college/university in your community. Many other groups are less obvious but good possibilities.

Let's consider some common issues relating to the national festival. (State and regional festival concerns will be similar.)

Space. "We seat 250 in our normal production location if the fire marshal is kind, and have no way to offer multiple workshops." (The national festival requires seating for at least 600 in the production venue, and space for six concurrent workshops.)

Your local community college (read university, college or other community site) may have a wonderful production facility. Others could have classroom space. Many national festivals, such as those in Norman, Kansas City, Des Moines, and Benton Harbor have used partnership facilities successfully.

Financial. "A national festival has a budget exceeding \$100,000; we could never raise that much money."

Every budget is a series of line items. Some are straightforward, registration income for example. All do not have to be in cash. Grants are a real possibility, if you begin on a timely basis. Again, think partnering. The possibilities are endless. The convention bureau or chamber of commerce could provide cash and/or services. Locally prominent corporations make excellent partners. Omaha received nearly all the food products necessary for the festival from a local company. Be creative and start early.

By the way ... You can actually make money from a festival. Several theatres have reported significant net income at state, regional and national events.

Volunteers. "We don't have enough volunteers as it is. If we do a festival, our productions will suffer."

This is usually more of an opportunity than a problem. Other performing arts organizations and arts council are a real possibility. You may even talk them into doing an event such as an after-theatre party. Any club or service organization may be interested if asked. One festival co-hosted with the Junior League. It provided all the volunteers necessary plus a grant, and the theatre retained many of these new, younger faces as volunteers and members long after the festival was over.

Turning the festival into a community event pays long-term benefits. Many communities don't have high quality performances and workshops available very often. Although the typical national June slot may be awkward, your local school system may be a possibility beyond borrowing facilities, perhaps as part of a summer arts program.

There are details. Outline areas of responsibility and reporting. Make the partner part of your committee structure and appropriate meetings. If they take a major role, consider making them a co-host. One of the best introductions to the process is to attend a festival. Some of the seemingly most unlikely people will buy into the overall experience.

When decisions are made, document the details. The form is unimportant, but everyone should understand that it amounts to a contract with duties and responsibilities for both parties. Consider occasional social activities. It could be as simple as a night at your theatre with a small party before or after. And, don't forget to say "thank you" early, often and publicly. Share the fun; share the glory.

In the end, if you have the dream, we may be able to offer suggestions based on real experiences elsewhere. Give us a call; let's talk.

National AACTFest Timetable

Summer 2010	<p>Pre-selection: Obtain local board and community support. Clear the dates. Organize essential committees. Select performance facility and hotel, and reserve. Plan local transportation between sites, if needed. Plan preliminary schedule and budget. Apply to host the national festival. (See Applicant Timeline, page 2.)</p>
October 2010	Submit preliminary proposal for review by AACT Executive Committee.
January 5, 2011	Submit proposal for distribution to AACT Board and Festival Commission.
February 2011	Present proposal, including video/power point, at joint meeting of the Festival Commission and AACT Board. (Tip: attend socials, observe committee meetings, and get acquainted.)
Spring 2011	<p>Post selection and pre-production: You have been chosen to host the national festival. Announce the honor to your community (after approval of press release by AACT). Confirm and complete facility and hotel arrangements, including meeting rooms, social functions, etc. Solicit partners for production, meeting and workshop spaces, personnel, etc. Apply for grants. Solicit major sponsors, in-kind contributions, underwriters. Plan other fundraising efforts. Finalize organizational chart and recruit committee members. Begin local reporting to board, major sponsors, etc. Design event logo. Update budget and schedule and submit to Festival Commission Chair for approval.</p>
May 2011	Submit written report for AACT Board including updated budget and schedule.
June 2011	<p>AACT Sanction fee payment due. Report at Festival Commission meeting. Attend AACT Board meetings and Workshops Committee meeting. Shadow '11 national festival and AACT Summer meetings.</p>
Summer - Fall 2011	<p>Debrief after '11 festival with committee chairs. Finalize committee work plans, deadlines, and budgets. Finalize social events, optional tours, etc. Update schedule and budget. Prepare national promotion plan, coordinating dates with national AACT office. Develop publications and website design. Submit content and basic layout of first direct mail piece and website to Festival Commission Chair for approval.</p>

December 1, 2011	Submit first direct mail piece, website, and other early promotional pieces to Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director for proofing and approval.
January 2012	Submit written report for AACT Board. Launch website.
February 2012	Report at Festival Commission meeting. Attend AACT Board meeting and Workshops Committee meeting. Send first direct mail piece to the printer. Obtain mailing list from AACT office.
March 1, 2012	Mail first direct mail piece. Coordinate with AACT office to e-mail theatre companies. Plan local publicity and promotions.
Spring 2012	Review and update committee plans and deadlines. Submit content and basic layout of second direct mail piece to Festival Commission Chair for approval. Finalize registration form contents and registration procedures with AACT Executive Director. Finalize schedule with Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director (AACT meetings). In consultation with the Festival Commission Chair and AACT Awards Chair determine when the AACT National Awards will be presented. Submit updated budget and income/expense statement to date to Festival Commission Chair. Begin promoting national festival at state festivals.
May 2012	Submit written report for AACT Board. Get list from AACT office and solicit exhibitors and program advertisers.
June 2012	AACT Sanction fee payment due.
July 2012	Report at Festival Commission meeting. Attend AACT Board meeting and Workshops Committee meeting. Promote festival at the AACT NYC Convention.
Fall 2012	Promote national festival at state and regional festivals. Finalize workshops list and needs with AACT Workshops Committee chair. Receive awards castings and plan for mounting them. Facilitate communication between Endowment event chair and facility/caterer. Prepare to receive silent auction items. In consultation with the Festival Commission Chair and AACT Endowment Chair determine when the hats will be passed for the Endowment. Submit second direct mail piece and other promotional pieces to Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director for proofing and approval.
October 2012	Submit report to Festival Commission Chair prior to Executive Committee meeting.

January 2013	<p>Submit written report for AACT Board, including income/expense statement with comparison to budget.</p> <p>Send second direct mail piece to the printer. Obtain mailing list from AACT office. Mail second direct mail piece.</p> <p>Welcome adjudicators and send them instructions for making travel arrangements.</p>
February 2013	<p>Report at Festival Commission meeting. Attend AACT Board meeting and Workshops Committee meeting.</p> <p>Promote festival at state and regional festivals.</p> <p>Prepare packets for the 12 entering companies.</p>
March 2013	<p>AACT Sanction fee payment due.</p> <p>Submit proof of insurance coverage to AACT per contract.</p> <p>Submit program format to Festival Commission Chair for approval.</p> <p>In consultation with Festival Commission Chair, determine additional awards. Create template for awards certificates.</p> <p>Plan locations for AACT displays.</p> <p>Recruit additional volunteers needed.</p> <p>Plan for collection of data needed for Final Report.</p>
April 2013	<p>Receive program info, tech info, scripts, etc. from entering companies. These should include cast photo with actors identified.</p> <p>Hosts contact companies.</p> <p>Confirm adjudicators' travel plans.</p> <p>Order supplies, name badges, etc.</p> <p>With the Festival Commission Chair, plan the awards program.</p> <p>Finalize AV and other needs with Workshops Committee chair.</p>
May 2013	<p>Submit program proof to Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director for approval.</p> <p>Send scripts to adjudicators and alternate adjudicator.</p> <p>Confirm arrangements with exhibitors.</p>
Month before Festival	<p>AACT Sanction fee payment due June 1.</p> <p>Step up local publicity.</p> <p>Send program to the printer.</p> <p>Prepare backstage areas and mark on-deck spaces.</p> <p>Train onsite volunteers.</p> <p>Prepare materials and assemble registration packets.</p> <p>Print name tags, event tickets.</p> <p>Communicate to adjudicator hosts plan for feeding adjudicators and adjudicators' schedule requirements. Host(s) contact adjudicators to welcome them and confirm airport pickup.</p> <p>Cut checks for entering companies' travel allowance.</p>
During Festival	Implement plans made!
After Festival	Celebrate successful festival! Send thank you notes. Submit final report within 45 days to Festival Commission Chair

Finances

Copies of budgets and financial reports from the last three national festivals can be obtained from the AACT office. While past reports can prove an invaluable aid, it is essential to have bids and estimates of your own from your own locale with current quotations. The same is true for budgets of prior National Festivals. Below is a general outline for a festival budget. Local conditions require changes. Not all items will necessarily be applicable. You may have additional items/needs not included here.

INCOME		
1 .	Sponsorships and Fundraising	The amount of money to be raised to supplement other income and balance the budget.
2 .	Grants	State arts council, local arts council, local foundations and others.
3 .	Registration	Festival packages include admission to performances, workshops and social events. A discount on full registration (equal to the 1 st time AACT member fee) is given to AACT members. All company members must register, but may do so prior to May 1, 2013, at the “early bird” member rate
4 .	Ticket Sales	Individual ticket sales for performance sessions.
5 .	Special Activities	Tours or other special activities.
6 .	Exhibits and Program Advertising	Vendor participation
7 .	Concessions/Souvenirs	
8 .	Misc	

Note: As added insurance, at least one festival secured underwriters who pledged to contribute (perhaps \$1000 each) to cover festival deficit, if needed.

EXPENSE		
1.	AACT Sanction Fee	\$10,000 due to AACT: \$2,500 by June 1, 2011 \$2,500 by June 1, 2012 \$2,500 by March 1, 2013 \$2,500 by June 1, 2013
2	Endowment Contribution	Based on \$15 per full registration
3.	Salaries and Wages	Personnel hired for festival, such as festival coordinator, tech crews
4.	Facility Rental	Theatre, meeting/workshop rooms, social functions
5.	Mailings	Printing and postage for two direct mail pieces
6.	Promotion/Advertising	
7.	Program	Design and printing of festival program

8.	Office Supplies	
9.	Printing/Copies	
10.	Postage	
11.	Telephone	
12.	Travel	Travel to AACT meetings
13.	Local Transportation	Shuttle busses, rides to home hosted dinners, etc
14.	Company travel allowance	\$1000 for each entering company, payable during festival
15.	Adjudicator expenses	Travel, food, lodging and social functions.
16.	Workshops	\$2000 for AV equipment, facilitator registration/lodging
17.	Registration Processing	Fees to AACT and credit card fees for registrations
18.	Registration Supplies	Name badges, bags, maps, etc
19.	Awards	AACT will provide the "Faces" castings; mounting the castings is the responsibility of the host as are any special certificates or awards
20.	Volunteer Support	T-shirts, name badges, food, thank you's
21.	Signage, Decorations	
22.	Hospitality, Social Functions	Tuesday early bird party, Wednesday mixer (such as Home Hosted Dinners), after performance parties, hospitality suite
23.	Awards Gala	Saturday night – format flexible, but awards program must be held in a theatre
24.	Special Activities, Tours	Tours and other special activities, lunches (if included)
25.	Concessions, Souvenirs	
26.	Misc	

Sample National AACTFest Budget

item	Income (item # refers to previous page)		
1, 2	Sponsorships/Grants/Fundraising		\$ 50,000
3	Registration		95,250
	Full Registrations 400 X \$230 (set by host, approved by AACT)	92,000	
	Non-member fees (approx. 15% of full registrations X \$30)	1,800	
	Late fees (approx. 2.5% of full registrations X \$25)	250	
	Daily 16 X \$75 - set by host, approved by AACT)	1,200	
4	Ticket Sales		5,000
5	Special Activities/Tours		3,000
6	Exhibits/Program Advertising		600
7	Concessions/Souvenirs		2,500
8	Misc.		100
	Total Income		\$ 156,450
	Expenses		
1	AACT Sanction Fee		\$ 10,000
2	AACT Endowment Contribution		6,000
3	Salaries Wages		25,000
4	Facility Rental		50,000
5	Brochures/Postcards printing mailing		5,000
6	Promotion/Advertising/Website		2,500
7	Festival Program		3,500
8	Office Supplies		715
9	Printing/Copies		1,000
10	Postage		250
11	Telephone		250
12	Travel		4,000
13	Local Transportation		1,000
14	Company Travel Allowance (\$1000 x 12)		12,000
15	Adjudicator Expenses		3,000
16	Workshops		2,000
17	Registration Proc'ing Credit Card Fees		3,700
18	Registration Supplies		800
19	Awards Awards Presentation		5,000
20	Volunteer Support		1,500
21	Signage, Decorations		500
22	Hospitality, Social Functions		2,800
23	Awards Gala		12,000
24	Concessions, Souvenirs		2,000
25	Special Activities, Tours		500
26	Misc.		500
	Total Expenses		\$ 155,515
	Income Over Expense (Profit/Loss)		\$ 935

Committees and Organizational Chart

Each job may be handled by a person or a committee. Tasks may be split or combined as the situations warrant. Be sure everyone knows what is expected and in what time frame. Listed below are various committee areas to be covered:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundraising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants Sponsors Underwriters Donations Vendor Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits Program Advertising Sponsorships Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Accounting Promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logo/festival graphics design Two required mailings Other mailings Publicity/Advertising Website Program Local Arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotel Transportation Communications Hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjudicator Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Hosted Dinners Social Events Awards Event Tours/Special Activities Registration/Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration Packets On Site Registration/Information Front of House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Box Office House Managers Ushers Souvenirs/Merchandise Sales Ceremonies and Special Guests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening and Closing Events VIP invitations/arrangements Awards Workshops Support Volunteer Coordination Technical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Design/Specs Backstage Prep Technical Crews (Two full technical crews may be wise for the National Festival)
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An organizational chart and job descriptions with delegation of authority and responsibility, and regularly scheduled meetings of festival officers and committees will make the entire festival process more manageable.

Sample Organizational Chart



Festival Facilities

The requirements of an AACTFest theatre facility are detailed in the *AACTFest Handbook*. The national festival requires a theatre with seating for at least 600. In addition spaces are needed for:

- Thursday, Friday Saturday morning workshops (six concurrently used spaces)
- AACT Endowment Silent Auction
- Vendor exhibits
- AACT meetings before and during the festival
- The AACT Endowment Event
- Two or three concurrent long-running, usually pre-festival, conferences

Hotels/Accommodations

The hotel(s) should:

- Be large enough to house everyone attending the festival.
- Have facilities meeting the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act.
- Be within walking distance of the theatre. (Hotels not within walking distance must have adequate transportation provided by the festival host. This transportation must be provided at no extra cost to festival attendees allowing easy participation at all festival events.) Hotels within walking distance may require transportation for those with physical limitations.

The hotel reservation information appears on the website and in *Spotlight*. This should include festival rate, deadline and code to get festival rate, toll free phone number and website address of hotel. Your local arrangements committee should reconfirm any tentative contract made and negotiate for the best possible deal immediately after selection. Get everything in writing. Hotel personnel change frequently; verbal arrangements or understandings may not be honored later. Hotels usually have convention rates. You need a firm rate quotation, not one subject to future increases. Although the contract is with the host, it is an AACT event, so the AACT VP Festivals and Executive Director are to review hotel contract(s) before signing.

Hotels will often provide meeting rooms at no charge based on number of room nights booked and complimentary sleeping rooms, usually one complimentary room for each 30 to 50 room nights your group uses. At the National Festival the AACT Board will need a large meeting room and some smaller rooms for committee meetings. AACT requires six guest rooms; three from Sunday, three more from Monday, all until Sunday.

Negotiations are easier when working with one hotel. Negotiate for as late a cut-off date as possible. Normally a hotel will hold a block of rooms until a month before the festival after which time reservations are accepted on an “as available” basis. If the hotel cannot extend the deadline or if it is expecting a busy weekend, you may need to line up alternate housing for late registrations. Alternate, more economical, hotels may be necessary for groups with limited budgets.

Publicity and Promotion

AACT promotes the national festival through *Spotlight*, e-promos, the AACT website, AACT displays sent to festivals and conferences, and other ways.

The National Host is responsible for two direct mailings, the festival website, local publicity, and providing additional promotion at festivals and conferences. The host should promote the festival with brochures/postcards and announcements at every state and regional festival in the AACTFest cycle, and at AACT events in the two years prior to the festival. Local publicity is important for recruiting volunteers and local sponsors and for selling single performance block tickets.

The final draft of all print pieces must be proofed and approved by the Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director, or designee. All written materials must have “American Association of Community Theatre” and, if graphics are used, the AACT logo, prominently placed. An overall “look” is important in any promotion campaign, thus the need for a festival logo. AACT will utilize the festival logo in its promotions of the festival.

The required direct mailings can be oversize postcards referencing the website, full brochures, or something in between. Postcard type mail pieces supported by an informative website have proven to be as effective as more expensive brochures. The first mailing is sent in early spring the year before the festival to encourage theatres to enter the festival process. It is mailed to AACT’s “Known Community Theatre” list and all AACT members, currently about 6,500. An additional 1,000 should be printed for distribution at events, in AACT member packets, etc. The second direct mailing goes a year later in the early spring prior to the festival to promote registration. It is mailed to AACT’s “Big List,” which includes past festival registrants. It is about 10,000. About 2,000 additional are needed for distribution at events, etc. AACT supplies the mailing lists. The host is responsible for the design, printing, and mailing costs.

Lead time is very important for the production of the printed mailers, as well as the festival program. A sample print production schedule is detailed below. Use this sample to work with your own printer and graphic artists. (Coordinate with National AACTFest Timetable, page 6.)

	PUBLICATION	DEADLINE DATE
1.	People need to receive this through the mail by:	March 1, 2013
2.	The Postal Service’s estimated time of arrival on bulk mail is 3 days to 3 weeks, depending on distance. (Back up 3 weeks)	February 8
3.	It takes 2 days to label and bundle. (Back up 2 days)	February 6
4.	If the printer needs 10+ work days to print, collate and bind, back up two weeks.	January 23
5.	Allow 5 working days for final proof and corrections from printer. (Back up a week)	January 16
6.	Allow 2 weeks for proofing and reproofing by Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director. (Back up 2 weeks)	January 2

Festival Website

AACT will secure a domain for the festival website. The National Host is responsible for hosting, designing, and maintaining the site. The site should be live by January the year before the festival and maintained several months past the festival. AACT may want to archive items from the festival site for use in showing past festivals, etc.

Content, copy, and the use of AACT graphics on the festival site must be proofed and approved by the Festival Commission Chair and AACT Executive Director, or designee. The home page must have “American Association of Community Theatre,” “AACTFest 13” and both the AACT logo and the festival logo prominently placed. All pages are to be identified with “AACTFest 13,” “American Association of Community Theatre,” or “AACT.” The overall “look” of the festival promotion campaign should be reflected in the design of the website.

For the most part, information on the festival website should not duplicate that on the AACT website. (Exceptions might include festival history or other copy that will not need to be updated during the cycle.) Instead links are to be placed on the festival site to the appropriate pages of the AACT site.

The host needs to have adequate access and trained personnel to update the site frequently and as often as needed. A site that is out of date or has incorrect information can harm, rather than help, promotion efforts. The site needs to be accessible for those with disabilities. For instance, graphics need text descriptions so text readers for the visually impaired can “read” the pictures.

When launched the website should include:

- Introduction of the host city and group
- How to enter a show
- AACTFest policy on censorship
- History and background information on AACTFest and the festival cycle
- AACTFest Goals
- Guidelines on adjudication
- Information on the host theatre, with photos
- Technical specifications for festival productions at the host theatre
- The dimensions of the off stage storage space allotted to each entering company, usually 10’x10’
- Contact information of those who can help
 - The National Host Chair
 - Festival Commission Chair
 - AACT’s Field Services Director
 - AACT office
 - Link to AACT calendar of state and regional festivals
 - Link to AACT Festival Commission Representatives
- Information on AACT
- Links to AACT membership information and how to join

- Acknowledgement of grant support
- General information
- It might also include
 - a personal invitation from the National Festival Chair(s)

By November 2012 the website should also include:

- Hotel information
- Airline and other transportation information
- Accessibility Services Information
- Schedule of events
- intro to and contact on festival committee chairs/leaders
- How to volunteer
- Vendor Opportunities
- Workshops, with leaders or speakers (Good, complete workshop information available early helps registration numbers.)
- Registration information, downloadable registration form (supplied by AACT office) and a link to AACT's online registration
- Tour options
- Biographies and photos of the adjudicators
- Information and links to city and nearby attractions
- It might also include
 - messages from governmental VIPs

By Spring 2013 the website should also include:

- Show/company information and photos (to be updated after each regional festival)
- Information on airport shuttles, transportation to festival sites
- Workshops Schedule
- Information or links to pre-festival conferences, such as the Technical Theatre and Community Theatre Management Conferences and links to registration for these events
- Elaboration on social events,
- Information on the AACT Endowment event and link to register
- How to buy single show block tickets
- Press Room for posting news releases
- List of exhibitors
- It might also include
 - lists of companies that represented their states in regional festivals
 - recognition of regional festival hosts

Scheduling

The national festival is usually held the third weekend in June. Any desire to deviate from this time frame should be explained in the application proposal.

Scheduling requirements for festival productions are detailed in the *AACTFest Handbook* and must be followed. All performances and rehearsals must be conducted in the same space. In addition to the actual productions, the following must be scheduled:

- Load in and load out times
- Entering company production meetings
- Rehearsals
- AACT meetings
- Workshops
- Adjudicators orientation meeting and tally meeting
- Festival social events
- AACT Endowment Event
- Presentation of AACT National Awards
- Opening and closing ceremonies (which may or may not include award presentations) which must be planned in conjunction with the Festival Commission Chair.

The schedule might also include

- Commercial Exhibits
- Design Exhibition
- Pre-festival Conferences
- Tours and other optional activities

Note: The Festival Commission has considerable scheduling experience. The Festival Commission Chair and/or others will help with your initial schedule, which is part of your presentation, and with subsequent detailed scheduling and revisions. The proposal needs only a schedule summary. A full detailed schedule should be studied to understand the intricacies of scheduling a national festival. The full schedule from the last festival is available from the Field Services Director.

Sample AACTFest Schedule Summary

(subject to change)

Monday, June XX

All day Tech Call – prepare stage/back stage
 Aft On site registration training
 Community Theatre Management
 Conference begins
 Technical Theatre Conference begins
 AACT Committee meetings begin
 Eve Festival production Meeting

Tuesday, June XX

All day Community Theatre Management
 Conference
 Technical Theatre Conference
 Morn AACT Board Meeting
 Aft AACT Committee Meetings
 Set up Exhibits & Silent Auction
 Registration opens
 Tech Crew Call/Rehearsal
 Eve Early Bird Party
 Load ins, Production Meetings,
 Rehearsals

Wednesday, June XX

Morn Load ins, Production Meetings,
 Rehearsals
 AACT Committee Meetings
 Adjudication Workshop begins
 Commercial Exhibits & Silent
 Auction open
 Adjudicators Orientation Meeting
 Community Theatre Management
 Conference ends
 Technical Theatre Conference
 ends
 Aft Performance Block 1
 Eve Opening Night Dinner
 Performance Block 2
 After Glow Party

Thursday, June XX

Morn Load ins, Production Meetings,
 Rehearsals
 Workshops & Exhibits
 noon AACT State Contacts Meeting
 Aft Performance Block 3
 Eve AACT Endowment Event

Friday, June XX

Morn Load ins, Production Meetings,
 Rehearsals
 Design Exhibition opens
 Workshops
 noon AACT Membership Meeting
 Aft Performance Block 4
 Eve Performance Block 5
 After Glow Party

Saturday, June XX

Morn Load ins, Production Meetings,
 Rehearsals
 Workshops & Design Exhibition
 Board Meeting
 Noon Festival Commission Public
 Session
 Aft Performance Block 6
 Adjudicators Tallying Meeting
 Eve AACTFest Awards Event

Sunday, June XX

Wrap up and Goodbyes

Registration

The registration form will appear in *Spotlight*. Registrations will also be accepted online. An “early bird” registration deadline should be shown prominently on the form. It is suggested that the host not accept any local registrations until after this deadline. Later out-of-town registrations can be accepted at a higher rate and on a space available basis.

It is required that a festival package be offered that includes all performances, workshops, awards ceremony and other social events. It is expected that a discount, equal to the first time membership fee, be given to AACT members. Company members must register, but will receive the “early bird” member rate if before May 1, 2013.

Note: Actual registration will be handled by AACT for a nominal fee plus direct costs (credit cards, etc.)

A registration packet should be prepared for all the attendees of the festival. It should contain:

- A festival program
- A schedule of pre-festival events
- The festival badge/name tag
- Tickets for special meals and/or events
- Tour coupons if purchased in advance
- A map, driving instructions, bus schedules
- What to do in the city
- Restaurant and shopping guide
- Pre-registration list of attendees
- Any other necessary information

A registration desk should be set up in a prominent position at the hotel and/or the theatre. This is where people who pre-registered pick up their packets and people who have not registered can do so. It should also function as an information booth.

AACT requires six (6) complimentary registrations which need not include the awards gala.

Company, Adjudicator, and VIP Hosts

Assign a team of host volunteers to each entering company. Before the festival have your host teams contact the regional winners, make themselves known, congratulate them, etc. They should meet the plane(s), help the groups get settled, tend to their needs and champion their cause throughout the festival, and see them safely off.

Make sure that each adjudicator also has a host. Adjudicator hosts ensure adjudicators are where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there. Local circumstances may allow for one host to be used for all three adjudicators. You may also want to provide hosts for any national or international VIP’s attending the festival.

Awards

A participation award is given to each of the 12 companies at the national festival. AACT will provide castings of “Changing Faces” for each award but it is the responsibility of the host group to provide the mounting and engraving. Any other awards related to the festival are the responsibility of the host group, but must be determined in conjunction with the Festival Commission Chair.

The Festival Commission Chair and the festival host will work together to schedule and script the presentation of the festival awards. The AACT Awards Committee chair needs to be involved in the scheduling and will script presentation of the AACT National Awards.

Interim Reporting

Written reports are to be sent to the AACT office in January, May and October, prior to each AACT Board and Executive Committee meeting. The Festival Commission Chair will review these reports and may need additional detail.

Typical reports will include, but not be limited to:

- Budget/Financial Report
- Schedule
- Current update information
- Other specifically requested items

Final Report

A final report for the festival must be prepared and sent to the Festival Commission Chair within 45 days after the end of the festival. This report will be presented to the AACT Board and Executive Committee at their next scheduled meetings after the festival. The report should contain:

- Final income/expense report with comparison to budget. Also detail backing up the income/expense statement, particularly expenses (printout of checks/transactions showing item, not just payee or summary, i.e. food for early bird party)
- Other useful statistics including:
 - Number of registrants, by type (will be provided by AACT office)
 - Number of single tickets sold, per performance block, # attending gala, including # extra gala tickets sold, # attending parties or how many planned for and was the plan on target
 - Hotel room types and nights used, broken down by day
 - Number of and first and second direct mail pieces, and programs printed/used
 - List of sponsors/donors non-local sponsors
 - List of commercial exhibitors with contact info of any not in AACT database

- Number of volunteers, broken down by area (registration/information, company hosts, etc.
- Merchandise and amounts sold
- Things you wish had been in previous festivals' reports and suggestions for future festival hosts.
- A summary of the evaluation forms filled out by the participants including any individual written comments

AACT Responsibilities

AACT will be responsible for:

- Advertising the festival in *Spotlight*
- Providing the award castings for the twelve entering company awards, plus one for the Host
- Selecting the three adjudicators and an alternate adjudicator
- Paying an honorarium to each of the three adjudicators
- Planning and providing the workshops in coordination with the host, and funding workshop expenses in excess of \$2000 (to be funded by host), but not to exceed \$2000 or a lesser amount budgeted for AACTFest 13 workshops in the 2012-13 AACT operating budget.

