

AAUW NYS District Conference Planning Guide

Getting Started

Understand the mission and goals of a district conference, and make this conversation with your branch the very first step. Among the goals:

- * Celebrate the solidarity of AAUW
- * Promoting the platforms of AAUW
- * Offering an opportunity to learn and grow
- * Offering newsworthy programming to increase visibility
- * Educating and entertaining

Begin the planning process early – at least six months ahead. Decide on your audience – AAUW or the larger community. Decide on format – conference/event/cohort group/movie - book discussion/research report

Planning Guide Checklist

	Selecting a Venue
	A great location is a college or university campus. Tap into members with college connections.
	Other options: A church hall, a community theater, a public library
	Assess handicap accessibility, dining facilities, parking.
	Selecting the Date
	Brainstorm dates at a branch meeting. Early fall is traditional. Saturdays work best, although a Sunday or even a weekday could work with the right planning.
	<i>Look for autumn conflicts, including religious holidays, school holidays, even Halloween.</i>
	Once a date is selected. Have a backup date ready just in case. venue is booked
	Selecting the Theme
	Decide on a focus for the conference. A strong theme will bring the day together and attract more participants. The theme will determine workshops and speakers.
	Incorporate a catchy phrase that can be formal or fun.
	Selecting a Keynote Speaker
	The keynote address should reflect the conference them. Ideally, it will be a newsmaker who will generate coverage of the conference and visibility for the branch and AAUW.
	Planning the Program
	Kick off with registration and refreshments, followed by welcoming remarks from the branch president and the host site (the president or provost if it's a college).
	Keep the speakers to a minimum, their remarks brief.
	The keynote address can follow. It's important to coach the speaker on timing and focus in advance.
	Offer two sets of concurrent workshops. This means two workshops presented simultaneously so participants have a choice. Fifty minutes is a good length for a workshop.
	Offer an attractive luncheon menu. Participants often remember this part of the program, so it matters.
	Plan a short program during lunch. Make it fun. Examples: An impersonation of a famous woman; a raffle.
	End with a wrap-up and thank you from the branch president.
	Publicize Early
	Design a flyer. Assemble a press release. Consult the visibility tab on the AAUW-NYS website for publicity tips and a sample press release. Make sure online registration is possible.
	Reach out early to the branches in your district with the date and theme. Announce in your branch newsletter and ask other branches to do the same.
	Helpful Hints
	Allow time for networking and socializing throughout the day. Don't jam too much into the program.
	Keep the registration fee low. The conference is not a fund-raiser.
	Remember name tags and present a gift bag to every participant.
	Send a thank-you e-mail to all participants.
	Call a wrap-up meeting to document challenges, accomplishments and suggestions.