



"Serving Western Legislatures"

The Council of State Governments-*WEST*

Annual Meeting

Fact Sheet

CSG-*WEST* Annual Meeting Fact Sheet

1) What is CSG-*WEST*?

The Council of State Governments-*WEST* (CSG-*WEST*) provides a nonpartisan platform for regional cooperation among the legislatures of the 13 western states, creating opportunities for legislators and staff to share experiences and ideas across state borders and learn from one another.

Based in California where it was founded in 1947, the CSG-*WEST* membership is comprised of the state legislatures of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

CSG-*WEST* also benefits from associate memberships with legislative bodies of Alberta, British Columbia, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam as well as collaborative partnerships with lawmakers of the border states of Mexico. The diversity of the member states and associate memberships of CSG-*WEST* reflect the uniqueness of the West as the only region sharing borders with all nations of North America as well as providing a portal to the rapidly expanding economies of the Pacific.

2) What is the purpose of a CSG-*WEST* Annual Meeting?

The annual meeting assembles western state legislators, staff and the private sector, providing opportunities for sharing ideas and building collaborative networks among legislators, who share state borders and/or have a common western perspective and culture. The Western Legislative Conference (WLC) policy committees and WESTRENDS – are two core programs of CSG-*WEST* convened at the annual meeting. The WLC constitutes the core policy committees of CSG-*WEST*, focusing on important Western issues, such as energy, public land management, education, fiscal affairs, transportation, trade, water and the environment. WESTRENDS, an ongoing regional legislative leadership dialogue, focuses on demographic, economic and cultural trends shaping the West.

General sessions and workshops on emerging or critical topics, such as health care, are addressed, and, in response to a growing demand for continuing education, ALTA (Annual Legislative Training Assembly) is convened on the first day, providing skills development and training seminars for lawmakers at all stages of their legislative careers. Recognizing the diversity and interests of the CSG-*WEST* membership and associates, a North America summit is convened on the first day, providing a forum for the exchange of critical information among public policy makers of Canada, United States and Mexico.

3) Who and how many attend?

In recent years, average attendance at the CSG-*WEST* Annual Meetings has been 540. Higher attendance numbers are experienced in the summer months, when family members accompany primary registrants. An estimated overview of attendance breaks down into the following categories:

30% primarily Western state legislators and some staff
20% program speakers and working staff

30% family members and guests
20% sponsors and private sector supporters

All western state legislator are encouraged to attend. Program sessions are open to all registered attendees.

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4) What are the benefits to an Annual Meeting Host Legislature?

The annual meeting, which historically rotates meeting sites among CSG-*WEST*'s 13 member state legislatures, provides the hosting legislature the opportunity to:

- showcase the state and enhance tourism and the economy in the area,
- assist in the development of a program agenda reflective of host legislative concerns and successes and
- benefit from tremendous networking and relationship-building opportunities for legislators and staff with colleagues throughout the West, learning from each other's experiences on issues of shared public policy concern.

5) What are the site criteria for a CSG-*WEST* Annual Meeting?

- An attractive area that offers recreational, cultural and some entertainment and tourist attractions for a conference. Frequently, the annual meeting is convened in a resort area, especially since the western region has a vast landscape of natural beauty to enjoy.
- Hotel(s) and meeting facility that adequately provide requirements for sleeping rooms, meeting space and on-site office needs.
- Preferred meeting dates are the summertime, which do not conflict with western state legislative sessions. Attention is also given to avoid election dates and possible conflicts with other scheduled meetings involving elected officials.
- Easy transportation access to meeting area, preferably with a major airport in proximity to site and adequate provision of ground transportation to and from the site.

6) How is the Annual Meeting funded?

Annual meeting funds are raised under CSG/CSG-*WEST* 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit organization, which provides tax benefits to private sector contributors. All funds (revenues and expenses) related to a specific annual meeting are maintained in a dedicated restricted account at CSG per IRS guidelines. CSG-*WEST* has an extremely credible history in working with host states to jointly build the annual meeting budget, raise the necessary funds and agree on expenditures. Annual meeting revenue is provided by meeting registration fees and contributions from the private sector.