



Want to host a

Webinar?

Let NCSL help!

A GUIDE FOR LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Why Webinars?

They're highly informative and extremely user-friendly: Participants can learn from the comfort of their desk or device. Webinars remain popular for offering a way to share information between professionals who have similar interests and responsibilities.

Thanks to the NCSL Foundation for State Legislatures, e-learning grants are available to pay for webinars, including faculty, on a case-by-case basis. NCSL can help you apply.

How Can I Put On a Webinar?

Just follow this guide. We'll walk you through picking a topic, selecting a presenter, and planning and promoting a winning webinar.

Step 1

Plan in Advance. Contact NCSL three to six months before the webinar. Your time commitment? As much or as little as you like. NCSL is your resource—our staff will partner with you to plan and execute the webinar. Reach out to your professional staff association liaison, a network or standing committee leader, or someone from our communications team. Simply contact them or email events@ncsl.org to let us know you're interested.

Step 2

Select a Topic. If you already have an idea, great! If not, here are some helpful hints:

- Share what you like. Was there a session at your last professional development seminar, the NCSL Legislative Summit or another meeting that would be interesting to people who couldn't be there? Have you recently mastered a subject or skill that you're eager to share? Chances are, if it piques your interest, it will do the same for your counterparts around the country.
- Fill a need. What do you need to excel in your job? Technical training? Professional development? Is there a vexing question or problem in your office that needs answering or solving? Use a webinar to teach yourself and others.
- Network. NCSL is the ultimate facilitator of networking for professionals working in state legislatures. We can help you reach out to your colleagues in other states to explore topic ideas.

Step 3

Pick a Presenter. Working in a state legislature and being a member of NCSL—which puts on hundreds of meetings—offers great access to some of the country's leading experts on a host of topics. You may already have someone in mind, but if not, ask around. NCSL can help. When considering a presenter, make sure he or she is prepared, professional, knowledgeable and engaging. Build in some practice time if necessary. *Speakers are advised to call in on a landline and connect their computer to wired internet to ensure the best connection.*

Step 4

Flesh Out the Format. Once you have your topic and presenter, it's time to outline your webinar. Do you need a moderator to introduce the presenter, keep the webinar moving and monitor questions from the audience? Experienced presenters may be adept at these tasks while others may not. Hold a conference call at least a month in advance to plan how the webinar will flow. The best webinars move at a steady pace, providing interesting information while not belaboring their points. Most webinars last an hour, including introductions and closing statement, and 15 to 30 minutes for Q&A. NCSL staff will handle the technical details and fill everyone in on how to participate.

Step 5

Promote Your Webinar. Identify your audience. Is it all legislative staff, or those who work in a certain area? Starting four to six weeks before the webinar, NCSL's marketing team can help you get the word out.

Step 6

Do a Dry Run. Conduct a brief practice run one week before the webinar.

NCSL hosts over 50 webinars per year.

Check out these examples on the Webinar Calendar and Archives page at ncsl.org/webinars:

- Hot Issues in the 2019 Legislative Sessions
- The Power of Podcasting
- Planning and Scoping Evaluations

Fabulous features

Your webinar can really shine with the features offered by NCSL's webinar platform, ReadyTalk:

- Polling and Q&A
- Videos
- Webcam for speakers
- Private chat box for webinar hosts
- Exit url to direct attendees to desired webpage
- Resources tab, speaker headshots and bio, sponsor logo
- Post-webinar survey

It may be possible to receive continuing professional or legal education credits via webinars, but requirements vary by state. NCSL can help determine whether CLEs or CPEs are worth pursuing.



The National Conference of State Legislatures is the bipartisan organization dedicated to serving the lawmakers and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories.

NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues, and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system. Its objectives are:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures
- Promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures
- Ensure state legislatures a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system

The conference operates from offices in Denver, Colorado and Washington, D.C.

