RCA Denver 2026 Convention Final Report

August 2026

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Team Formation & Facilitation

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- Having lead roles for each area (generally the categories shown in this report: Budget, Registration, Program, Space, Swag, Menu, etc.)
- Having regularly scheduled meetings: First Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm for most of the year, then twice per month for 2-3 months before the event, then weekly for the last month.
- Keeping meetings to an hour long for most of the year and then increasing to 1.25 hours for the last month of weekly meetings.
- Having a template/standing agenda (based on all the categories shown in this report); didn't talk about each category each time, but considered whether we had to discuss anything at the beginning of the meeting, and organized the agenda accordingly.
- Keeping track of action items and decisions from each meeting in one document for the entire planning period (rather than separate documents for each meeting).
- Had a celebratory dinner soon after the convention (with one of our team members who was from out of town).
- Allowing individuals to work on the committee rather than requiring couples.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.

- Planned to have a debrief/lessons learned meeting soon after the convention but forgot to schedule it so wrote this report offline.

- Documented a better understanding of the WSO people and who to go to for what (e.g., ABM planning for Friday vs. Board elections planning for Sunday vs. Conference Committee vs. Growing the Fellowship Committee vs. the last Convention team for the AV equipment vs. the next Convention team for the presentation)
- Better clarity on our role regarding the ABM and our responsibilities.
- Create an independent website for registration and payment, avoiding having to send updated info to WSO to add to the website.

Hotel

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- The day before the event, our hotel contact set up a text group for a few of us and a few of them and we used it constantly to let them know of issues or logistics such as if coffee was running low. Highly invaluable.
- The Hotel wanted us to use a complicated software for laying out our site map and instead we drew it by hand and gave it to them and they used the software which was great

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.

- Have someone from the WSO sign the hotel contract as opposed to an individual from the Convention Committee–seems an unfair burden and risk to put on a volunteer.
- Raise an alarm soon if your primary Hotel contact seems unresponsive or not keeping good notes from your conversations. Our hotel contact ended up disappearing very suddenly a month before the convention. Looking back it should have been a red flag from her poor performance working with us. It was a relief that they hired an experienced contractor to be our liaison who got us over the finish line

Budget

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- Initially created a detailed, thorough budget with input from various committee members.
- Created a spreadsheet with worksheets for monthly entries and a linked YTD summary sheet.
- Reported the actual vs budget income and expenses on a monthly basis at the convention committee meetings on Zoom and provided those reports to the Annual Convention Committee.
- Maintained good communication with committee members to get copies of receipts and cost summations sent to Treasurer (members were very good about doing this).
- Reimbursement was done by submitting the receipts/costs to the WSO bookkeeper who would then cut a check and send to recipient. Although this seemed like it might be a bit cumbersome, it ended up working pretty smoothly due to timely communication between the Treasurer and bookkeeper who generated checks quickly.

- In general, direct Treasurer communication with the WSO bookkeeper as needed was quite helpful.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.

- Setting an intentional contingency expense line item in budget. We ended up using the Audio-Visual category as a contingency fund because we knew we were not going to need most of it.

Registration

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- Keep the Jotform (or whatever registration mechanism is used) open from the date of the current convention to the date of the planned convention: we had 33 registrations in the time frame that the WSO recommended we shut down registration (Nov-March).
- Add a column to the Jotform to indicate cancellations for better tracking of total registrations.
- Include a statement about how important hotel registrations are for the success of the convention–ensures we meet minimum requirements and don't incur additional fees.
- Include a column asking for those interested or willing to present so the Program Couple can reach out to them from the beginning.
- Use the WSO-provided email to send bulk emails to registrants.
- Download the Jotform periodically to check on numbers and convert to a Google Sheet to share with fellow committee members, especially the treasurer/budget person.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.

- Create our own webpage that we could update independently in real-time with the latest program and convention information instead of sending singular PDFs with information to the WSO to post on their website, which was inefficient and often delayed.
- Ensure that the information clearly separates the hotel fee from the convention registration fee to avoid confusion.
- Separate first name and last names in the Jotform for easier sorting when creating name tags and check-in lists.
- Limit dietary restriction options to the most common ones: vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free and dairy-free–trying to track and accommodate allergies to seed oils and sugar was challenging and may have set false expectations.
- Sent a reminder to all the registrants about the refund policy a week before the deadline.

Program

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- Start recruiting workshop couples from the registrations 4-5 months ahead of the convention. Email early for workshop/breakout leaders, and be clear that content should

draw on RCA literature, the 12 steps, tools, and personal experience, strength, and hope. Continue sending emails every 4-6 weeks with the goal of having all 16 workshops filled by 2-3 weeks before the convention, along with 2-3 backups.
- Track submissions in a spreadsheet (couple names, workshop title, description, contact info) and add session time/room only once all 16 slots are filled. Bring in experienced RCA workshop-programming members from past conventions for guidance.
- Working with the Space Planning & Usage on the room workshop room layouts.
- Line up copy editing and document design help early for the final program — and if possible, get help scheduling the four Open RCA meetings.
- Amplification with 2 microphones is necessary for the workshops.
- Having the program printed and ready for swag at least 10 days before the convention.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.
- Had 2-3 backup workshop presenters available for cancellations.
- Ask the workshop leaders what room supplies they need.
- Include a placeholder for Unknown workshop supplies in the budget

Banquet/Menu

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do:
- Having a buffet instead of a sit-down dinner: made dinner time much faster (5:30-6:30 pm), which allowed us to get to the speaker couple by 7pm, which allowed the after party to start by 8:30pm, with pretty good attendance for at least an hour.
- Collecting allergy information on the registration form and avoiding the allergens in the buffet (limit to just the most common allergies).
- Making the buffet accessible for gluten-free and dairy-free diets (cheese and bread on the side).
- Karaoke was fun - would do it again; was good to plan that the first 3-5 songs were good dance songs (with ready singers) that would quickly get the room going; important to have a way for people to make requests as the night went on.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience:
- On the registration form, we should have given three options (Fish, Chicken, Vegan) rather than ask people to fill in their diet restrictions. In the end those were the three options the hotel made available (no Vegetarian vs. Vegan).
- Ensuring there was zero alcohol in the food, even cooked off (e.g., “Sherry Cream” in the mushroom soup)
- Should have been ready to possibly have the next convention team make their presentation on Saturday night during the end of dinner before the speaker couple, if there was time (there was, which was unexpected)

Audiovisual/Supplies

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- Avoid renting AV from the hotel - the bid was $9k for projector, screen and wifi alone! Can't imagine what it would have been with audio equipment.
- Using our own screen and projector - we bought a new big screen for $100 and donated it to WSO for future usage. Recommend WSO upgrading its projector (we used one owned by a committee member instead)
- Working with hotel to get free wifi access just for presenters (not paying for it for all attendees on the meeting floor)
- WSO's 4 sets of speakers and wireless mics work great for the small meeting rooms, but we definitely were happy to have professional audio equipment for the big meeting room and banquet party. We were lucky one of our members had the equipment. Recommending seeing who in the community can bring good equipment and be in charge of managing it.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.

- Confirming what's in the WSO inventory - we weren't sure there would be easels so we brought them with us (didn't open the WSO box with easels but they look good and sturdy)
- Planned to buy flip charts sooner, was a last-minute purchase (we packed our 4 charts up with the WSO supplies, there are still plenty of pages, no need for Richmond to buy more)

Name Tags

What worked well that we would recommend future teams do.

- Create a check-in spreadsheet with couple names and last names to ensure name tags went to the right couple (we had two couples both listed as "Mike irw Mary").
- Printed selected RCA affirmations on the back side of the name tags.
- Share lanyards and name tag holders with the next year's convention committee for reuse.

What we would have done differently had we known what we learned from this experience.

- If working with a professional printing company, find a way to ensure the order stays the same since last names are not included on the name tags; maybe include a small code or number for easier sorting.