SECTION OF ANTITRUST LAW

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMITTEE-ORGANIZED U.S. NETWORKING EVENTS/RECEPTIONS

One of the valuable benefits of membership in the Antitrust Section is the opportunity to attend networking events/receptions organized by Section Committees. The Section strongly encourages these activities. Indeed, the number of such receptions organized has increased over the past several years due to the success of these events in facilitating informal member interaction and attracting new Committee members.

To reduce costs, many of these events are held in law firm reception areas. If not managed properly, the use of these locations can cause confusion regarding which entity is responsible for the event. The Section has long held a “no private sponsorship” policy for any Section events and thus it is important that efforts be made by program organizers to avoid creating misperceptions. Committee events are sanctioned Section activities and thus ABA and Section policies apply.

To avoid confusion over current application of those polices, the Committee Operations Committee offers the following guidance and required procedure for Committees desiring to organize and hold such events in the U.S. Programs abroad present different issues and are not covered by these guidelines. All programming abroad, including networking events/receptions will be managed by the Programs Officer and handled by Staff in coordination with committees as appropriate.

All stand-alone Committee networking events/receptions (i.e., those not associated with a Section stand-alone program or organized by the Staff) are considered “committee programs” and must be submitted in advance for approval using the Committee Program Approval tool on the leadership portal. All requests for approval must include the proposed date and location of the event, the anticipated number of attendees, an indication of whether Section payment for food/beverages will be sought, and if so, a good faith estimate of the cost of the event and identification of the entity that will seek Section payment. Care should be taken to avoid proximal conflict with SAL CLE programs; approval may be denied on the basis of a conflict. If the event is approved, the submitter will receive written confirmation from the Committee Officer and Diane Odom. You should not proceed with advertising the event until you have received written approval. The fact that you already advertised the event will not be recognized as an exception for an otherwise disapproved event.

If your proposed speaker is the AAG, Attorney General, a Supreme Court justice, or the Chair of a federal agency (including the FTC), the initial invitation must come from the Section Chair (or in the Chair’s absence the Chair-Elect). If the speaker is a Commissioner, DAAG, or Bureau Director, or a judge, the committee should notify (but do not have to obtain approval of) the Committee Officer at least seven days in advance of any request. In addition, any of the officials described in this paragraph must be introduced by an Officer or other member of the SAL Council. If a member of the SAL Council is not available, approval by the Committee of an alternative member of the SAL leadership to introduce the speaker is required.

Committees may refer to the hosting law firm’s name in marketing materials when identifying the location of the event. To avoid the appearance of formal co-sponsorship or commercialization, law firms should never be formally designated ‘co-sponsors’ of these events, regardless of whether they will be supplying food/beverages at no charge or seeking Section payment therefore. Use of the law firm logo on any program advertising is prohibited. Members or employees of the hosting law firm who are not a member of the organizing committee’s leadership should not have any role in the event, including acting as master of ceremonies or formally welcoming attendees. The hosting law firm should not display any firm marketing materials at the event. The hosting Section committee must have a sign-up sheet for the event and forward it to ABA staff immediately following the program.
If the hosting law firm will be requesting Section funds to cover the cost of the event, the ABA requires completion of a New Vendor packet (a link to this information is included in the Committee Program approval form). An invoice must be submitted to the ABA (via Diane Odom) within 30 days after the event. Payment will thereafter be made to the vendor (hosting firm, caterer, etc.).

As with all Committee events, please review “Committee Programs—Requirements and Best Practices” located on the Leadership Portal under Committee Resources.