HOW TO PLAN AND PRESENT A YLD REGIONAL SUMMIT

YLD Regional Summits are a great way for Affiliates to gather and to develop and grown their own Affiliate and their own programs and activities, and to offer new benefits to their members. They also allow Affiliates to share ideas with other Affiliates for the greater good of all of the Affiliates in the region. Regional Summits can take on a variety of different shapes and forms, from as elaborate as a multiple-day conference at a hotel or a resort, to as simple as a half-day meeting. Regardless of the form they take, Regional Summits are a great way for Affiliates to improve their programs, improve their leadership, and to better serve their members.

If your Affiliate, or Affiliates in your region, have never planned or organized a Regional Summit, it may seem like a daunting task. However, it is not. All it takes is a few dedicated individuals to plan and implement the Regional Summit. Other Regional Summits that have been held across the country in the past few years demonstrate that, once the planning process is implemented, Affiliates and their members and leaders will get involved, and will help make a Regional Summit great.

Below is an outline of topics that should be addressed when planning and implementing a Regional Summit. This list is not exhaustive, but is meant to ask as a guide, and to raise questions and issues that may need to be addressed. Each Regional Summit planning process will have its own challenges. However, the information below can act as a tool to help get you started, and to demonstrate that a Regional Summit is something the Affiliates in your region can successfully plan and implement.
I. Determine the purpose of the Regional Summit

A Regional Summit can have a number of different purposes. A Regional Summit could be held exclusively for any of the purposes listed below, or a combination of these, or other, purposes:

A. Leadership meeting

A Regional Summit can be held for the purpose of training Affiliate leaders in the region. Many Affiliates do not have the resources to send their leadership to ABA YLD meetings. Accordingly, some Affiliate leaders never get the opportunity to receive any training, or to develop new ideas with other Affiliate leaders. Therefore, a Regional Summit is a great opportunity to hold a leadership training. A Regional Summit that is held solely for Affiliate leadership also has the benefit of keeping a Regional Summit to a more manageable attendance size, as only Affiliate leaders will be invited to participate.

B. General membership Regional Summit

A general membership Regional Summit would invite all members of all Affiliates in the region to attend. This type of Regional Summit is likely to have the largest attendance, and is also likely to have the greatest impact as far as the number of individuals involved. Most members of Affiliates are unable to attend ABA YLD meetings, thus, a general membership Regional Summit allows these individuals to attend a conference with young lawyers from other Affiliates.

C. Specific topic Regional Summit

A Regional Summit could be held for the purpose of addressing a specific topic. This Regional Summit would only appeal to those interested in the specific topic,
but would do the best job of focusing solely on that issue. Specific topics for a Regional Summit like this could include specific areas of practice, a specific-type of public service project, or a specific pro bono or volunteer opportunity.

II. **Determine the "Region" for the Regional Summit**

You must determine what geographical area the Regional Summit is going to include when inviting Affiliates. Important factors to consider are the population of the region, the size of Regional Summit you desire, and whether or not Affiliates in specific geographical areas have opportunities to participate in Regional Summits, or have a specific need. Regions could be defined in the following ways:

A. **Statewide Regional Summit**

   This type of Regional Summit invites every Affiliate in a state.

B. **County-wide Regional Summit**

   In some very largely populated cities, there are numerous Affiliates in one county. In such instances, a county-wide Regional Summit could be an option.

C. **ABA YLD district Regional Summit**

   Many of the ABA YLD districts include multiple states. It is possible for a Regional Summit to be held including all the Affiliates in the state of your ABA YLD district.

D. **Multi-state or multi-county Regional Summit**

   Regional Summits could be held for multiple states or multiple counties, even if those states or counties are not in the same ABA YLD district.
III. Creating your Regional Summit planning committee

It is important to carefully select those who will serve on the planning committee for the Regional Summit. It is important to include at least one representative, if possible, from every Affiliate that will be invited to the Regional Summit. In some instances, it may not be realistic to have a leader from every single Affiliate on the planning committee. However, in the instance of a multi-state or multi-county Regional Summit, it is necessary to have at least one person on the planning committee from each state and/or county involved in the Regional Summit.

IV. Creating a Regional Summit budget

The budget for a Regional Summit is directly related to the type of Regional Summit that is going to be held. In the event of a Regional Summit that will last a single-day or less, the budget can probably be fairly small. Factors to consider are whether meals, or other food, will be offered. In the event of a multi-day Regional Summit, budgets will be larger. The following are some factors to consider when planning your budget:

A. Contributions from Affiliates

The first source of money for a budget to consider is monetary contributions from the Affiliates, themselves. Many Affiliates have budgets and funding, but some do not. This must be taken into consideration when determining whether Affiliates will contribute money to the budget of the Regional Summit. It may be necessary for some Affiliates, like state Affiliates, to contribute directly to the budget, while other Affiliates do not.
B. Charging entry fees

Charging entry fees to a Regional Summit can assist with the budget for the conference. A planning committee for Regional Summits should be careful when determining the rate to set for entry fees. It is important not to charge an entry fee that will discourage maximum attendance. On the other hand, pre-paid entry fees and ensure that attendees that RSVP will actually attend. Many Regional Summits can build their entire budget upon entry fees.

C. Sponsors

Another source to consider when building a budget for a Regional Summit is sponsors. Sponsors can include law firms, bar associations, businesses and vendors who are interested in advertising to lawyers.

V. Planning your programming

The type or programming offered at a Regional Summit is somewhat dependent upon the type of Regional Summit that is being held, i.e., a leadership meeting, a general membership Regional Summit, or a specific topic Regional Summit. It is also somewhat dependent upon whether the Regional Summit will be one day or less, or multiple days. The following are examples of types of programming that could be offered at a Regional Summit, and considerations to take into account for each type of programming. Again, this list is not exhaustive.

A. Leadership training

Leadership training could be offered at any type of Regional Summit. If the Regional Summit is focused solely on leadership, it must be included. Many smaller Affiliates do not get the opportunity to have any leadership training, so
leadership training can be one of the most important types of programming that can be offered at a Regional Summit.

**B. Networking**

Networking is another important type of programming that could be included in a Regional Summit. Like with leadership training, many smaller Affiliates do not get an opportunity to network with lawyers outside of their Affiliate. Accordingly, it is a nice benefit to Affiliates in the region to offer networking opportunities. Networking events can be as formal as speed networking or "icebreaking" type activities, or can be as informal as events that are integrated with social events.

**C. CLEs**

CLEs that focus on the interests and concerns of young lawyers is a good type of programming to offer as a benefit to Affiliates in the region. Again, many smaller Affiliates do not get the opportunity to attend young lawyer-focused CLEs.

**VI. Social Events**

It is best to include some type of social event at any type of Regional Summit, whether the Regional Summit is as short as a half day, or is multiple days. Social event planning is where planning a Regional Summit can become creative. This is the opportunity to try to plan unique events that will attract young lawyers to the Regional Summit. Social events can include things as simple as happy hours, but can also include more elaborate events like dinner/dances, concerts, nightclubs, outdoor activities like golf or run/walks, or attending other events professional or college sporting events.
VII. Executing the Plan

Executing the Regional Summit will take the work of a few leaders from the planning committee. Try to divide up the work, and assign specific parts of the Regional Summit to different individuals on the planning committee, as to not overwhelm any one person. For example, one person could be in charge of leadership programming, another person in charge of CLEs, and another person in charge of social events.

VIII. Learning Lessons

Learning lessons from Regional Summits is important for future planning. Pay attention to which programming is well attended, and which is not. Also, pay attention to how popular the social events are. If lessons are learned from Regional Summits, that will allow future Regional Summits to be more successful. Make sure the planning committee meets for a wrap up meeting following the Regional Summit, so that detailed notes can be made as far as lessons learned, and plans for future Regional Summits.

IX. Conclusion.

Regional Summits are a great way to network, and expand the impact of your Affiliate. A little bit of work can go a long way, and can make the event enjoyable for everyone.