



2024 Virtual Assistance Committee Charge (Draft)

Approximately 9 months prior to the meeting date, NPC chairs or cochairs may appoint a Virtual Assistance Committee (VAC) chair. Subsequently, the VAC Chair recommends appointments to the NPC Chair or Cochairs from a list of volunteers to assist with virtual aspects of the conference and to generate enthusiasm and excitement about virtual offerings and engagement. Appointments include as many members as deemed necessary.

As a new National Program Committee (NPC) subcommittee, the VAC may choose to identify specific areas to enhance the virtual conference experience, including:

1. Publicity and Promotion (which includes conference blog articles and scheduling, suggestions for conference website content relating to virtual conference attendance.)
2. Provide content and scheduling suggestions, and act as volunteer hosts through MLA's Zoom account for virtual networking activities and games.
3. Investigate possible virtual city experiences (e.g., library, museum, or other virtual tours)
4. Blog/Twitter volunteers (call for and organization of official bloggers & tweeters to provide view into virtual sessions as they are happening)

VAC members should be selected approximately 6-9 months out from the conference. VAC members are considered to have at least one year of committee service and will receive 10 AHIP points; the VAC chair receives 15 AHIP points.

MLA Headquarters provides a community communication venue (email list or other option) for the VAC and can arrange regular Zoom meetings for the group. MLA's COO (Kate Corcoran) serves as the main staff liaison for the VAC. MLA's Marketing Manager (Hannah Jeon) would work with any blog/Twitter volunteers in concert with the NPC Blog Editor.

The VAC assists the NPC and HQ staff with:

1. Publicity and promotion about virtual offerings
 - o MLA Headquarters marketing staff rely on the VAC to ensure the best face of the virtual conference is presented to potential attendees at the official conference invitation and online in the months leading up to the conference.
 - o Currently the conference invitation is virtual, in August, just prior to the start of contributed content submission.
 - o VAC volunteers review and suggest updates for the schedule of conference blog articles in coordination with the NPC Blog editor and MLA's Marketing Manager. The VAC chair may call for volunteers to draft articles and share posts on relevant email lists. Articles typically promote various aspects of the virtual conference such as virtual events, calling attention to best practices for managing

work and conference, providing instructions for various software uses, promoting virtual networking/community or city experiences, etc.

2. Virtual city experiences (e.g., library tours or online Guide to Local Libraries; virtual tours to other city or cultural destinations, such as “Ride with me on the Portland Tram” or Portland Art Museum’s online collections or virtual tours (perhaps with a discussion) examples here: <https://youtu.be/NntbD5r2v78> | <https://youtu.be/6LHp2Rrnw28> | <https://youtu.be/NJE-wCctAOg> | <https://youtu.be/ASwW2ocurRM> | <https://www.youtube.com/@portlandartmuseum>)
3. The VAC may coordinate virtual tours at times that do not conflict with virtual meeting programs. Or, the VAC may encourage participants to take virtual tours at any time on their own by providing additions to tour material such as a subsequent discussion.
4. Volunteer assistance with during-meeting networking activities
The VAC may choose to have a specific volunteer coordinator who would solicit and assign volunteers for various activities during the conference. This could include specific networking or gaming options or get-togethers for virtual attendees. Onsite attendees would also be able to attend these functions.

By 2 months out, the VAC should confirm event hours and volunteer list and schedule with the HQ staff liaison, who will ensure Zoom scheduling, meeting links, passwords, and alternate host invitations are available for volunteer hosts.

Past virtual event examples

Past events for virtual attendees have included

- **Virtual sessions:** MLA schedules specific virtual paper, immersion, lightning talk, and poster sessions from presenters who wish to present virtually. Sessions are generally managed by MLA staff. Selected onsite sessions may be recorded for or live-streamed to virtual attendees, based on overall meeting AV budget and contract.
- **Virtual networking or gaming events:** during MLA’s full vConferences during pandemic years 2020 and 2021, and some virtual events in 2022, various options were presented/explored:
 - How-to or demonstration options (“Shaken, stirred, and rinsed: muddling your way to classic cocktails”, MLA ’20; MLA ’20 Jukebox)
 - Games: (“Black Jeopardy with AAMLA,” MLA ’21, “Around the House Scavenger Hunt,” MLA ’22)
 - Networking events (e.g., caucus networking events, book discussions, virtual lunches, etc.)

NOTE: Any virtual events cannot conflict with scheduled virtual conference content, including plenary sessions or scheduled live-streams of symposia or contributed content. Evening events may take place at the same time as onsite opening reception or during other free evenings. Multiple options or “repeats” might be useful to support attendees in multiple time zones.