CALL FOR PROPOSALS

To: Interested Speakers & Presenters
From: Virginia White, MACo Member Services Director
Subject: Submitting topics to be considered for MACo’s Summer Conference, August 18-21, 2021

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) is beginning to gather topics for our Summer Conference to be held August 18-21, 2021 at the Roland Powell Convention Center, Ocean City Maryland.

The theme of this year’s conference is “Resilient. Responsive...Ready.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world. All aspects of modern life have been affected – public health, of course, but also how we conduct business, educate our schoolchildren, and govern our communities. Some of these will return to “normal,” but some changes will be with us forever. The socio-economic impacts are still unfolding, but we can be certain – counties stood on the front lines of the pandemic and will lead the recovery. At this conference, MACo and county leaders will explore the local role in pandemic response and recovery – strategic planning, evolving service delivery, emergency communications, advancing technologies, and fiscal obstacles – all of which constitute the fabric of local leadership.

LIST OF POTENTIAL TOPICS:
(all proposals will be considered, but MACo is interested in covering the following topics)

- Leadership in times of crisis – best practices and lessons learned
- Best practices around county priority issues such as pandemic response and recovery, public health funding, broadband access, and elections
- Technological tools or best practices to deliver services, respond to crises, or inform residents
- Human resources and personnel challenges and solutions in a work-from-home world
- Next steps around virtual education – the opportunities and the pitfalls
- Continuity of service delivery in a prolonged emergency – innovative programs that served county residents during the pandemic
- Leveraging private and non-profit resources to support county functions
- Bolstering economic development and tourism in the aftermath of the pandemic
- Innovative inter-agency efforts to improve services for vulnerable populations
- Communication techniques to engage residents – social media, but also innovative ways to reach “unplugged” populations
- Cybersecurity in digital service delivery
COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS:

This conference is tentatively being planned as an in-person event. It is MACo’s intention to record all in-person presentations and make them available to registered participants after the event. **Please do not submit a proposal if you cannot allow your presentation to be recorded and distributed.** If the in-person portion of the event needs to be canceled due to pandemic precautions, speakers will be notified and presentations will likely be re-scheduled and re-formatted to fit a virtual platform. MACo anticipates making that decision in May.

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL:

For your topic or session to be considered, please send the following information by email to vwhite@mdcounties.org no later than 5:00 pm on April 15, 2021:

- Submit via email to vwhite@mdcounties.org
- Include email subject line: “2021 MACo Summer Conference Proposal (organization or person name)”
- In body of email or as attachment:
  - Topic and/or draft title
  - Brief abstract of information to be covered (LIMIT: 150 words)
  - Suggested speakers (individual names or generic titles, e.g. county finance officer, Delegate, etc. – please do NOT make invitations and please see notes below regarding session format)
  - Contact information for follow-up

SESSION FORMAT DETAILS:

MACo’s educational sessions are typically 1 hour in length and focus on issues of interest to county government officials and staff. A proposed session does not need to fit the conference theme, but it is strongly encouraged.

To ensure that we present a balanced presentation with varying viewpoints, MACo’s conference sessions will normally include 3, possibly 4, speakers; for example: a county representative, an academic representative, a State agency representative, and/or a commercial representative. MACo is open to other formats so long as they are balanced and inclusive.

We frequently invite legislators to moderate the panels, particularly when the subject matter extends into state policy or potential legislation.

MACo’s conference planning group is very open to other formats, but please keep in mind that if your topic is accepted, MACo may need to add or substitute speakers to achieve our desired level of viewpoint diversity – **MACo will make all decisions on speakers and will invite speakers directly.** If your topic is selected, a MACo staff person will be assigned to coordinate that session and invite speakers.

We do not allow presentations that strive to sell a particular product or service as part of our educational session program. If a commercial representative is included on a panel, they are included
as an industry expert and are asked to speak broadly about industry best practices with only minimal focus on their particular commercial entity and only as it relates to the topic or project being discussed.

**If you represent a commercial organization and would like an opportunity to talk specifically about your product or service**, we offer a special Solutions Showcase of 30-minute sessions on a topic of the sponsor’s choice. Please contact Leslie Velasco at 410.269.0043 or lvelasco@mdcounties.org for more details.

**NOTIFICATION TIMETABLE:**

MACo’s conference planning group meets in late April and makes decisions on a final slate of presentations by early May. You will receive an email confirmation that your proposal was received right away, but notification of proposal status may not be until May 15.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached by phone at 410.269.0043 or by email at vwhite@mdcounties.org.