



AAOS 2026 Exhibitor Resource Guide

This step-by-step guide will take you on an exciting journey through pre-meeting planning, successful participation, and post-meeting follow-up.

AAOS
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

2026 Annual Meeting
March 2-6, New Orleans, Louisiana

Introduction

Soon you'll experience the AAOS Annual Meeting, the largest gathering of orthopaedic professionals in the world. We are thrilled you'll be participating!

If this is your first time exhibiting, we know the planning process can feel overwhelming. But don't worry—you're in the right place.

This guide will walk you through everything you need to know, from defining your goals to maximizing your visibility and ensuring a strong follow-up plan.

Along the way, we'll share:

- ✓ Insider tips for navigating the AAOS Annual Meeting
- ✓ Proven tactics to elevate your exhibit strategy
- ✓ Valuable tools & resources to drive tangible results
- ✓ Tried-and-true best practices for optimizing your return on investment

Exhibiting at AAOS isn't just about showing up—it's about showing up with purpose. You've made the investment. Now let's make it count.




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Meeting at a Glance

The AAOS 2026 Annual Meeting is five days of powerful education, innovation, and collaboration. **This year's meeting will take place Monday through Friday.**

All events will take place at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center	Monday March 2	Tuesday March 3	Wednesday March 4	Thursday March 5	Friday March 6
Attendee Registration*	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	6:30 – 11:30 a.m.
AAOS Education Sessions	8 - 9 a.m. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. 2 - 3 p.m. 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	8 - 9 a.m. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. 2 - 3 p.m. 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	8 - 9 a.m. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. 2 - 3 p.m.	8 - 9 a.m. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. 2 - 3 p.m. 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	
AAOS Self-directed Learning	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	
OrthoDome		8 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	8 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.	
Industry Exhibits		9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	
 PRO INSIGHT Make it count: Plan in-booth presentations or product demonstrations, schedule staff for peak engagement, and promote your activities alongside AAOS education in the Annual Meeting app and website to draw attendees to your booth.		<div> <div> 9 - 10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. 1:30 - 2 p.m. 3 - 3:30 p.m. </div> <div> Dedicated Exhibit Hours 9 - 10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. 1:30 - 2 p.m. 3 - 5 p.m. </div> <div> Happy Hour in the Hall 3–5 p.m. </div> </div>			
Casting Courses			8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	
Career Center	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	7 a.m. – 5 p.m.	
Your Academy 2026 Guest Speaker, Business Meetings			9:30 – 10:30 a.m. 10:30 – 11:45 a.m. 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.		
Specialty Society Programs					various times

*Attendee registration will be open on Sunday, March 1, 2–5 p.m..

Dedicated Exhibit Time: The Hours That Can Define Your Success

Across three days, 11.5 hours of dedicated exhibit hall time gives you direct access to surgeons and other healthcare professionals. During these breaks, attendees step away from education, and focus on exhibitors. This is the best opportunity to hold conversations, showcase products, and build relationships.

11.5 hours of
dedicated
exhibit time



Identifying Your Objective Is a Must

Before we dive into all the details, take a moment to think big picture. **Why are you exhibiting?**

Your objectives form the foundation of your entire strategy. Without them, it's easy to lose focus on a floor with more than 600 exhibitors.

Maybe your goal is to generate new leads, strengthen relationships with current customers, or build brand awareness among orthopaedic surgeons. Whatever the priority, defining it upfront gives your team direction and a clear way to measure ROI after the meeting.

When outlining objectives, avoid conflicting goals and resist overextending your team. At a meeting as busy as AAOS 2026, clarity and specificity are essential.

Consider these tips:

- ✓ Choose no more than 3 core objectives - anything more scatters focus
- ✓ Assign daily targets (for example: 8 badge scans, 3 demos, 1 follow-up meeting)
- ✓ Make sure each goal is SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound
- ✓ End each day with a 10-minute huddle to review numbers, celebrate wins, and adjust.
- ✓ Share goals with your booth team so everyone is aligned and accountable

You don't need a dozen goals. Start with 2 or 3 that matter most to your business, make them SMART, and unify your team around them.

SMART Goals

=

**Specific, Measurable,
Achievable, Relevant,
Time-Bound**

Specific: "We want to generate 40 qualified leads."

Measurable: "Track leads using badge scans and notes."

Achievable: "Our 3-person team will aim for 12 leads per day."

Relevant: "Target orthopaedic surgeons in spine and sports medicine."

Time-Bound: "Follow up within 7 days of the meeting."



Build Your Meeting Budget

Your meeting budget is your roadmap. It helps you plan wisely, stay flexible, and avoid costly surprises onsite.

Start with the basics: booth size, furnishings, and how much you want to invest in standing out. Every exhibitor has unique goals and constraints, so your budget should reflect your priorities.

Here's a sample breakdown of how exhibitors *typically* allocate costs:

Budget Allocation

Costs

% of Overall Budget

Exhibit Booth

- Rent or Custom-Build the Booth
- Booth Graphics
- Booth Furnishings and Floor Covering

30%

Exhibition Marketing and Engagement

- Print and Online ads
- Ad Designs
- Product Brochures
- Sponsorships/Promotional Opportunities
- Booth Giveaways

25%

Logistics

- Display Labor
- Electricity
- Material Handling
- A/V

20%

Booth Staff

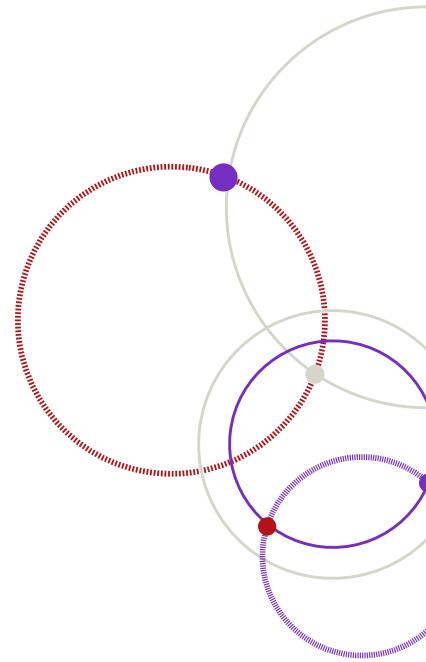
- Booth Staff Expenses
- Travel
- Hotel Accommodations

15%

Miscellaneous

- Upgraded Wi-Fi
- Housekeeping
- In-booth Catering
- Unexpected Booth Repairs
- Office Supplies

10%



*The budget allocation percentages above are only suggested and may vary based on each exhibitor's meeting needs and goals



Early planning = Early savings. Most vendors offer discounted pricing if you order before deadlines.

Add key dates to your calendar now.

Rules & Regulations: Stay Compliant, Stay Competitive

Exhibiting at the AAOS Annual Meeting comes with huge opportunities, but also important rules. Think of this section as your “avoid-the-headache” checklist. Staying on top of deadlines and regulations not only keeps you compliant, it protects your budget, your booth placement, and your peace of mind.

The [Exhibit Prospectus](#) is your complete overview of what you need to know about exhibiting at the Annual Meeting.

Why it matters

Deadlines = Savings. Submit orders late, and you could face surcharges of up to 30%.

Compliance = Future Booth Location. Break rules (like tearing down early), and you'll lose 25% of your priority points—making it harder to secure a prime spot next year.

Details = Fewer Surprises. From badge registration to booth construction, knowing the fine print upfront prevents costly fixes onsite.



Review the [Exhibit Prospectus](#) early in your planning cycle and share it with your entire booth team so everyone is aligned on requirements.

Priority Points: Secure a Prime Booth Location for 2027

[Priority points](#) are the system AAOS uses to determine the order of exhibit space assignments. The more points you earn, the better your position when it comes time to select your booth, giving you first access to high-traffic areas on the floor.

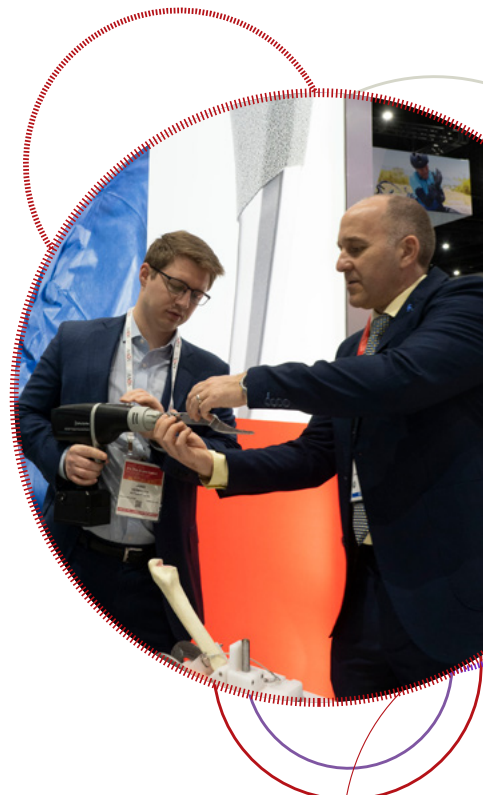
Points aren't just about space. They recognize your company's ongoing support of AAOS, reward you for meeting deadlines, and engaging in opportunities that strengthen your presence at the meeting.

How to earn priority points:

- ✓ Exhibit at AAOS 2026
- ✓ Submit your application, deposit, and final payment by the deadlines
- ✓ Book hotel rooms through the official housing vendor, onPeak
- ✓ Your AAOS 2026 spend counts. Exhibit space and promotional or advertising opportunities both contribute to your point total
- ✓ Support additional AAOS programs outside the Annual Meeting



The more consistent your participation, the stronger your priority position becomes year after year.



Your Go-To Hub: The Exhibitor Resource Center (ERC)

The Exhibitor Resource Center (ERC) is your personalized planning dashboard and the single most important tool you'll use on the road to AAOS 2026. Think of it as your command center—every checklist item, update, and order lives here. Staying ahead of deadlines often means fewer surprises, smoother onsite execution, and more time to focus on what matters most: connecting with attendees.



What You'll Find Inside the ERC

The ERC centralizes everything you need to prepare for the Annual Meeting:

- ✓ **Interactive Checklist** – Stay on track with key deliverables and deadlines. From registering badges to uploading your company logo, you can check tasks off as you complete them.
- ✓ **Exhibitor Badge Registration** – Register your booth staff, manage changes, and print confirmation emails with ease.
- ✓ **Company Profile Updates** – Add or edit your company description, product categories, contact info, and logo. A complete listing ensures attendees can find you in the online directory and mobile app.
- ✓ **Invoices & Payments** – Access, pay, and print invoices all in one place—keeping your finance team happy.
- ✓ **Exhibitor Insurance** – Submit or purchase your compliant Certificate of Insurance directly through the portal.
- ✓ **Attendee Lists** – Purchase targeted attendee lists to expand your reach and connect before the meeting.

How to Access the ERC

For the initial login to the Exhibitor Resource Center, the exhibitor's primary contact must enter their email address. An automated message will be sent with a link to create a password. After setting the password, the contact can log in and add additional users, each of whom can create their own login credentials. If an exhibitor encounters any issues logging in, please refer to the Exhibitor Resource Center Login Instructions for assistance.

Exhibitor Resource Center Login Instructions



Share ERC access with your whole booth team. Dividing tasks like badge registration, listing updates, and invoice tracking saves time and prevents last-minute scrambling.



Complimentary Exhibitor Directory Listing

Start Reaching Attendees Prior to the Meeting!

Every exhibitor at AAOS automatically receives a complimentary online directory listing, but how you use it makes the difference between getting overlooked or discovered.

Think of it as your digital storefront. Thousands of surgeons and healthcare professionals search the directory and mobile app to decide which booths to visit before they ever step onto the exhibit floor. A complete, compelling listing puts you on their schedule. A sparse one risks being overlooked.

Why it matters?

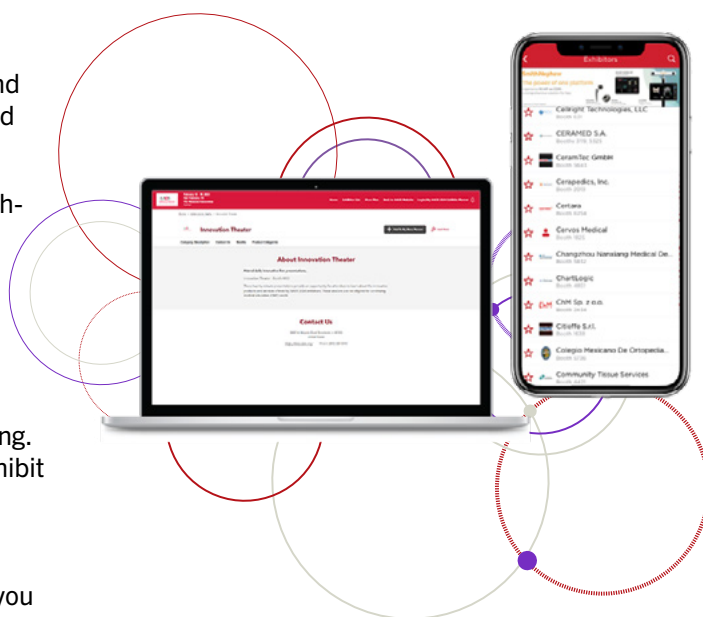
- ➔ **Year-round visibility:** Your listing is live before, during, and after the meeting. Attendees can find you long before and after the exhibit hall show days.
- ➔ **First impression power:** Many attendees build their booth-visit plan entirely from the directory.
- ➔ **No extra cost:** This is free marketing; be sure to take advantage of it.

Tips to stand out with a compelling listing:

- ➔ Complete your listing at least 4 months before the meeting. In November, AAOS begins promoting exhibitors and Exhibit Hall activities to registered and prospective attendees. Completing your listing early ensures you're included in these pre-meeting marketing efforts. Use clear, benefit-focused language in your description to show what sets you apart.
- ➔ If you're launching or showcasing a product, mention it in your description. Attendees are drawn to innovation.
- ➔ Include keywords related to your core products, specialties, or conditions treated so your listing is more likely to be found.
- ➔ Select product categories carefully, they impact search visibility.
- ➔ Add your logo to reinforce brand recognition.



Exhibitors with complete listings and product categories receive 3 times more views than those with incomplete or generic listings. [Update your listing now.](#)



Ready to Rise Above the Noise?

A complete listing is good, but an Enhanced Exhibitor Listing is better. With added visibility, premium placement, and lead generation tools, it's the easiest way to turn interest into booth conversations. [Learn more about Enhanced Exhibitor Listing.](#)

Design a Booth That Draws Attendees In

Attendees walk the hall quickly, scanning for what catches their eye. You have about **3 seconds** to make them pause. That means your booth needs one clear, visible message that tells them why they should stop. Consider the following design elements:

- **Branding:** Incorporate logo, colors, and messaging for a cohesive look.
- **Layout:** Create a space that encourages engagement with products and provides a comfortable space for conversations.
- **Lighting:** Use lighting strategically to highlight key areas and create an inviting atmosphere.
- **Graphics and Signage:** Use bold visuals and clear messaging to stand out and be memorable. Keep text short and positioned at eye level - attendees don't have time to stop and read long messages.
- **Interactive Elements:** Consider incorporating touchscreens, demos, or activities to keep attendees engaged.



Walk the hall like an attendee. Which booths draw you in, and which do you pass without a second glance? Use that perspective to shape your own booth design for future events.



Exhibit Space

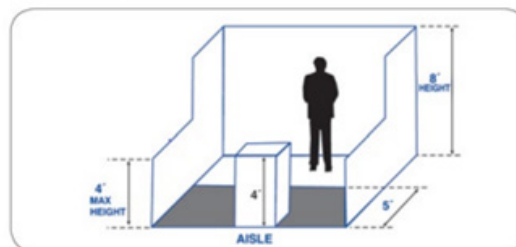
Included with Exhibit Space:

- 8' back drape, 3' side dividers
- 7" x 44" ID sign (linear booths)
- 5 complimentary badges per 100 sq. ft.
- Complimentary Exhibit Hall Wi-Fi
- Discounted housing through onPeak
- Shuttle bus service
- Listing on AAOS website & app

Not Included with Exhibit Space:

- Booth Furnishings
- Electrical
- A/V
- Floor Coverings/Carpet (required)

Here is a helpful visual aid for the height restrictions for linear exhibit booths:



Review the Display Rules starting on page 18 of the [Exhibit Prospectus](#) for important booth construction guidelines like height limits, ADA compliance, signage, storage, and more.

Optimize Your Exposure

The Exhibit Hall is very large, and attendees have limited time. To stand out, you need to promote your booth before and during the meeting. Consider the following no-cost strategies:



Exhibitor Listing: Attendees use the website and meeting app to decide which booths to visit. Complete your complimentary listing with an engaging description, your company logo, and product categories to get on their must visit list.



Official Exhibitor Graphic: Request the AAOS 2026 graphic by emailing exhibits@aaos.org to use in your emails, social posts, and print to highlight your participation.



Be Featured in AAOS Attendee Marketing: Submit your products and services to be highlighted in pre-marketing communications to thousands of registrants. Complimentary to all exhibitors, and only select products are featured.



Social Media: Use the official hashtag #AAOS2026 to join the conversation and extend your outreach.



Email Outreach: Invite existing customers and prospects to schedule time at your booth.



Press Releases: Announce launches or milestones tied to the meeting (review the [Media Communications Policies](#) before distributing).

Explore AAOS Marketing and Advertising Opportunities

Exhibitors who leverage pre-show marketing, integrate across multiple channels, and follow up after the meeting [see up to 80% more booth traffic](#), about [25% higher ROI](#), and [10% higher conversion](#).

From high-impact digital campaigns to can't-miss onsite branding, these tools are designed to:

- ✓ **Put your brand everywhere attendees are**—online, in the convention center, and in their inboxes.
- ✓ **Build credibility and awareness** so attendees recognize your name before they even hit the floor.
- ✓ **Drive traffic directly to your booth** by keeping your company top-of-mind throughout the meeting.
- ✓ **Differentiate your brand** from hundreds of other exhibitors competing for attention.

Whether you're aiming for a bold convention center takeover or a targeted digital ad, AAOS has customizable options to fit your goals and budget.

Explore the [full menu of promotional and advertising opportunities](#) here and choose the tactics that align best with your objectives.



Skip the guesswork—use the Exhibitor Marketing Kit! Inside you'll find ready-to-use graphics, promotion ideas, and proven tactics to help you cut through the noise of 600+ exhibitors. The kit walks you through how to build awareness before the meeting, drive traffic during show hours, and keep leads warm long after the event.

If you want to maximize your investment, [start here](#). The most successful exhibitors don't plan without it.

From Booth to Experience: Engage Attendees Differently

First impressions happen fast and on a crowded exhibit floor, your booth must do more than just “look nice.” Attendees remember the booths where they do something, not just where they see something. Creating an interactive experience encourages them to pause, spend more time with your team, and start conversations that can lead to lasting relationships.

Here are a few ways exhibitors have created memorable experiences at past meetings:

- ✓ Product Demonstrations
- ✓ Light Snacks and Beverages
- ✓ Raffles and Giveaways
- ✓ Q&A Sessions
- ✓ In-Booth Presentations with a Surgeon Champion
- ✓ Sports-Related Activities (i.e. Putting Green)
- ✓ Celebrity Spokesperson

If you plan to host an in-booth activity, review pages 9 & 10 of the [Exhibit Prospectus](#) for details and submit the [Booth Activities Request form](#) for AAOS approval.



Booth Giveaways: Choose Wisely

Giveaways can be a powerful way to extend your brand beyond the exhibit hall. The best items are the ones attendees actually use, during the meeting or in their professional activities, so your logo stays visible long after the show.

Guidelines for giveaways:

- ✓ Items must be educational in nature
- ✓ They should be usable onsite or in the professional work of the attendee
- ✓ Each item must have a value of less than \$100

Approval process

If you plan to distribute educational items beyond product literature or samples, [submit a request](#) for approval by **January 8, 2026**.

Items that do not require approval include:

- ✓ Product literature
- ✓ Writing pens, pencils, notepads, rulers, tape measures, luggage tags
- ✓ Food or beverage items ordered through the convention center’s exclusive provider, Sodexo Live
- ✓ Small paper or plastic bags (no larger than 14” x 11” including handles). A sample or drawing with dimensions must be submitted for review and approval.

Items not permitted include:

- ✓ Golf balls, pocketknives, t-shirts, lanyards, adhesive-backed decals, stickers, unofficial badges, pins, buttons, or large shopping/tote bags



The most successful giveaways tie back to your brand story and provide value to the surgeon or healthcare professional --think tools or resources that make their day easier, not items that get tossed in a drawer.



Official Hotels, Better Rates, Extra Priority Points

You've locked in your booth—now it's time to book your stay.

AAOS partners with OnPeak to secure discounted hotel blocks across New Orleans, all within a convenient distance from the convention center. Booking through OnPeak ensures better rates, flexible terms, and peace of mind. Plus, it also earns you **two priority points** toward 2027 space assignment.

[Housing Reservations Portal](#)[Exhibitor Housing Guidelines](#)[Hotel Map](#)[Hotel List with Amenities](#)

Mark These Dates

January 9, 2026

Last date to enter names to reservations within an exhibitor's block. Reservations without names will be dropped from an exhibitor's block.

January 9, 2026 @ 5:01 PM CST

Room night deposits become non-refundable

January 13, 2026 @ 9:00 AM CST

The two-night deposits will start being charged by the hotels

February 9, 2026

Last day to make reservation changes through onPeak

February 17, 2026

Contact hotels directly to make reservation changes



Housing for International Exhibitors

AAOS has designated onPeak's International Groups Department (IGD) as the official international travel agent for AAOS 2026. IGD EXHIBITORS: partner of onPeak, provides ConServices®.

ConServices® provides exhibitors with dedicated multilingual travel experts from online to onsite and provide exceptional individualized customer assistance for housing, travel, ground services, special events, and registration needs. To reserve your IGD Exhibitor Housing and learn more about all-inclusive options, please visit www.aaos-igd.com. For any questions, please email IGD at exhibitors@aaos-igd.com.



Beware of Fraudulent Housing Companies

Fraudulent companies pretending to be the official AAOS housing company contact exhibitors every year in an attempt to offer assistance with hotel reservations. Beware of these false and fraudulent claims. **onPeak is the ONLY official Housing Provider for the AAOS 2026 Annual Meeting.**

Many of these are outright scams with no actual reservation abilities. We cannot guarantee the authenticity of these companies. Do not provide your credit card information or any other payment for hotel reservations to anyone other than onPeak. AAOS is not responsible for any reservations made or payments submitted through unofficial housing companies.

Housing Questions

OnPeak
1-800-631-9079
(US & Canada)
1-312-527-7300
(International)
aaos@onpeak.com

AAOS
Erin Cannon, CMP
Operations Manager
847-384-4188
cannon@aaos.org





Exhibitor Badges: Your Team's Access to AAOS 2026

Exhibitor badges identify your staff and serve as their entry pass to the Exhibit Hall and all educational programming, such as poster presentations, symposia, paper presentations, and instructional sessions (space permitting). Some special events may require separate registration or fees.

Each exhibitor receives **five complimentary badges per 100 sq. ft. of booth space**. AAOS does not provide or sell badges beyond your company's allotment. If you require a staff change during the meeting, you can exchange badges at the registration desk as needed.

Registering your team is easy through the [Exhibitor Resource Center](#). You can:

- ✓ Add booth personnel names (within your company's allotment are complimentary)
- ✓ Select badge distribution options
- ✓ Send confirmation emails to booth staff
- ✓ Make name changes or exchanges for previously registered badges
- ✓ Review and print a list of registrants and badges picked up

For full details, refer to the [Exhibitor Badge Registration Information and Policies](#).

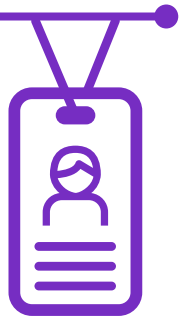
Onsite Badge Pickup

Your company's badges can be picked up onsite at Exhibitor Registration located in **Lobby D of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center**. During the online registration process, you will be asked for your badge distribution preference: Mail, Group Pick-up, or Express Pick-up

- ✓ **Mail (U.S. only):** Register badges by **January 15, 2026** to have them mailed directly to your designated company contact. Badges will be sent on **January 27, 2026**.
- ✓ **Group Pick-Up:** All company badges can be collected onsite at Exhibitor Registration by any registered company representative.
- ✓ **Express Pick-Up:** Each booth staff member will receive an email with a barcode on **February 24, 2026**. Onsite at the Express Badge counters in Exhibitor Registration, your staff can scan their barcode (or search by last name) to print their badge quickly.



Choose the option that best fits your team's arrival schedule. Group Pick-Up works well for large teams that meet prior to the Exhibit Hall opening, while Express Pick-Up is ideal if staff are arriving at different times and need fast access to the hall.



The Exhibitor Service Manual

Exhibiting at the AAOS Annual Meeting takes planning, and the [Exhibitor Service Manual](#) is designed to make that process easier. It contains everything you need to order exhibit services and prepare for the meeting in one place.

The [Exhibitor Service Manual](#) is your source for ordering:



[Furniture](#)



[Auto Visual \(A/V\)](#)



[Photography](#)



[Electricity](#)



[Lead Retrieval](#)



[Internet](#)



[Carpet](#)



[Floral](#)



And Much More!



Set aside time with your team to go through the Exhibitor Service Manual as soon as it's available. Identify what you'll need, note key deadlines, and assign responsibility for each task. Early planning prevents costly surcharges and ensures nothing falls through the cracks.



AAOS 2026 Official Vendors

The AAOS secures suppliers and vendors as official contractors to provide the necessary services for a successful meeting and exhibition. We encourage all exhibitors to utilize their services. To identify our partners, please use the [Service Contractor List](#), or look for the "AAOS official vendor" designation on order forms, websites, and email communications. Any other vendor who contacts you with offers for these exhibit services is not affiliated with AAOS in any way.

Utilize the Exhibitor Checklist

The Exhibitor Checklist is the ultimate list of deliverables and deadlines for AAOS 2026. Use this interactive tool to stay on top of tasks specific to your booth, deadlines for AAOS deliverables, and more. The Exhibitor Checklist can be accessed by visiting the [Exhibitor Resource Center](#).



Order Early & Save - most of our vendors offer early discount pricing!

Booth Services



Booth Furnishings

Set the scene for engagement! The right booth furnishings set the stage to educate attendees about your brand, inspire audiences to partner with you, display your products elegantly, or connect through conversation.

Exhibit space does not include booth furnishings, electrical service, A/V, or floor covering/carpet (which is required for all exhibitors). [For booth furnishings, exhibit packages, graphics, and more, view the full furnishings brochure and order form.](#) Be sure to order before the discount deadline of **January 28, 2026**, and save!



Electric Services

Installation and connection to all electrical services must be made by the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the exclusive provider of electrical services. Whether you require basic household/office power or a more technical installation for equipment, audio-visual presentations or truss lights, MCCNO's electrical specialists and qualified electricians are always available to assist you. [To view all electrical services and costs, visit the Electrical Services web page.](#)



Audio Visual (A/V)

Standing out among the noise around your booth may be one of the biggest challenges in the exhibit hall. Audio/Visual within your booth is a great way to draw attention and is essential for your exhibit. Not only does this display important information about your products and services, but it also enables you to create an unforgettable and unique experience for attendees. [View the A/V options that will highlight your products and project a visual that attendees will remember long after leaving your booth.](#)



Internet/Telecommunications

AAOS will be providing complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the exhibit hall for exhibitors for basic internet access, such as browsing the web or checking emails. A login for this network will be provided both before and onsite at the meeting. If you are needing a more robust or private network for greater needs such as streaming video, connecting devices to each other, or more, it must be ordered through Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the exclusive supplier of Internet and Telecommunications services.

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center provides both wireless and hardwired services with the option for public or private IP addresses which can be both statically assigned or automatically assigned. Ernest N. Morial Convention Center will be available to assist in determining the right solution for your booth needs. [For packages and pricing, view the Internet and Telecommunications order form.](#)



Booth Catering

Serving light snacks or beverages in your booth is a great way to attract attendees, promote your brand, and make connections. The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center offers an in-house vendor, Sodexo Live, that allows exhibitors to arrange catering services, as no catering from outside vendors is allowed. [For food and beverage ideas, view the Catering menu.](#)



Floral

Greenery and floral arrangements can enhance your booth and give the area a distinctive finishing touch that makes it stand out from the others. Whether your exhibit space is large or small, thoughtful selection and placement of plants and flowers can create a warm and inviting environment. [View the Floral brochure to learn how to make your exhibit more visually attractive.](#)



Lead Retrieval

A successful exhibit at AAOS 2026 is much more than just purchasing a booth and showing up. Meeting qualified prospects and turning them into loyal customers is the true measure of exhibiting success. With just a quick scan of an attendee's name badge, you can qualify, rate, and take notes on each lead. [Learn how to capture, collect, and manage all your leads with ease.](#)

Exhibitor-Appointed Contractors (EACs)

An Exhibitor-Appointed Contractor (EAC) is any company other than the AAOS "general" or "official" service providers that needs access to your booth during installation or dismantling (for example, a display house, third-party installer, or independent contractor).

If you plan to use an EAC, the [Exhibitor Appointed Contractor Approval Form](#) must be completed. This ensures your contractor is approved for access and submits the required insurance documentation to receive a wristband for entry to the exhibit hall.



Ensure your EAC submits the Approval Form early to avoid delays with their access during move-in and move-out.



Shipping and Material Handling

Shipping can be one of the trickiest (and priciest) parts of exhibiting—but it doesn't have to be stressful.

Whether you're sending a booth structure, product samples, or boxes of brochures, this section breaks down exactly how to get your materials to and from the show safely and on time.



Here are the major components to keep in mind:

Target Move-in Schedule

To ensure a smooth installation, AAOS assigns each exhibitor a target move-in time based on booth size and location. The [Target Move-In Schedule](#) tells you the day and time when your freight should arrive at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Important to know: Target times are guidelines only. They indicate when trucks may begin being dispatched to the dock area from the marshalling yard, not the exact time your booth will be unloaded or installation will start.

If you need to adjust your assigned time, complete the [Target Move-In Change Request Form](#) by **January 26, 2026**.

Shipping Services

Shipping can be a significant part of your exhibit expenses, so it's important to plan carefully. Costs will vary based on the weight of your shipment, but the key is choosing a provider who understands trade show logistics because delivering to a convention center is very different from a standard delivery.

- **Domestic Shipping:** ELITeXPO is the official domestic shipping service provider for AAOS 2026. They offer fully integrated options at competitive rates and are familiar with the unique requirements of moving freight into convention centers. For more information, [view ELITeXPO's competitive rates](#).
- **International Shipping:** For exhibitors shipping materials from outside the U.S., Rock-It Cargo is the Official International Freight Forwarder and Customs Broker. They provide assistance with customs clearance, delivery to the handling contractor, and re-export of freight after the show. For more details regarding international shipping, [view Rock-It Cargo's brochure](#).

Using official providers gives you the peace of mind that your freight will be managed by teams experienced with AAOS procedures and timelines.



Choose a provider early and confirm they have your assigned target move-in date. Delays in shipping or customs can add unexpected costs and jeopardize your booth installation schedule.



MORE
DETAILS



Material Handling (Drayage)

Material handling, often called drayage, covers everything that happens to your freight once it arrives at the convention center. Freeman, the official contractor, provides this service exclusively for AAOS 2026. Here's what material handling includes:

- Unloading your shipment at the dock
- Transporting it to your booth
- Storing empty crates and cartons during the show
- Returning empties at the end of the meeting
- Reloading freight onto trucks at show close



Build material handling into your budget early. Exhibitors often underestimate this cost, but planning ahead prevents sticker shock and ensures your freight is handled smoothly.

This service is **not included** in your booth rental or shipping costs. [Pre-ordering your material handling](#) saves time and helps you avoid costly surcharges onsite.

Inbound Shipping

You have two options for getting your freight to the meeting: Advance shipping to the warehouse or direct shipping to the convention center.

Advance Shipping to the Warehouse (Recommended)

- Freeman's offsite warehouse begins accepting crated, boxed, or skidded shipments on **Wednesday, January 28, 2026** and the deadline is **February 18, 2026..**
- Allows you to track your shipments in advance.
- Receive priority move-in and have your freight delivered to your booth for the start of your target move-in time.
- Be sure to use the [preprinted warehouse shipping labels](#).

Direct Shipping to the Convention Center

- Freight may be delivered directly to the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center **on or after your assigned target move-in date and time.**
- All vehicles must first report to the [Marshalling Yard](#) --no vehicle is allowed to the dock without check-in.
- Trucks must have a certified weight ticket (gross and tare) before being routed to the dock.
- Freight will be delivered to your booth on your target move-in day, but the time of delivery is not guaranteed. Please schedule installation crews accordingly to avoid downtime.
- Be sure to use the [preprinted show site labels for all direct shipments](#).

Outbound Shipping

When the meeting ends, every outbound shipment requires:

- Material Handling Agreement
- Bill of Lading (BOL)
- Shipping labels

These documents are available at the Exhibitor Service Desk. Freeman can also prepare and deliver them to your booth if you complete the [Outbound Shipping Form](#) at the onsite Service Center in the back of Hall E before the show closes. Your carrier must know your **company name and booth number** when scheduling pickup. This ensures freight is matched correctly and avoids delays.



Complete your paperwork before the final day of the meeting and confirm arrangements with your carrier in advance. Last-minute preparation can lead to long waits or unplanned costs during move-out.



Booth Installation & Dismantling



Move-In

AAOS assigns each exhibitor a target move-in time based on booth size and location, see the [Target Move-In Schedule](#). Your booth must be fully set by **5:00 PM on Monday, March 2, 2026**. If your booth is not in the process of being set up by **3:00 PM that same day**, it will be regarded as a no-show. In that case, freight will be removed at your expense and AAOS may reassign the space.

Booth installation on the morning of **Tuesday, March 3, 2026**, is not permitted. However, exhibitors may use this time to place product, stock literature, and prepare their booth for opening. For a full overview of access times, review the [Exhibit Schedule](#). If additional time beyond published installation hours is needed, an **After-Hours Work Permit** will be available onsite from an AAOS Floor Manager.



Share your target move-in time, Exhibit Schedule hours, and the 5:00 PM Monday deadline with your shipping provider and installation crew. Careful planning prevents costly delays, additional fees, or the risk of losing your booth space.

Move-Out

Dismantling of exhibits begins at **3:00 PM on Thursday, March 5, 2026**, when the Exhibit Hall officially closes. Booths must remain intact until that time. Exhibitors who dismantle early will forfeit **25% of their accrued priority points** for the AAOS 2027 space assignment.

After the show closes, plan to remain with your display materials until crates are returned and all freight is packed. The return of empty crates cannot begin until aisle carpet has been removed and may take **4 -6 hours** after the hall closes. Please factor this into your departure schedule.

All exhibits must be dismantled, packed, and have shipping labels and a Bill of Lading (BOL) turned in to the Exhibitor Service Center by **2:00 PM on Saturday, March 7, 2026**. Any freight left on the floor without a BOL may be rerouted at the exhibitor's expense. Neither AAOS nor Freeman will be responsible for costs, damages, or losses associated with unclaimed freight.



Do not book staff or carrier departures too close to hall closing. Build in extra time for crate returns and paperwork to avoid missed pickups or costly re-routing of freight



Setting Up Your Booth

Setting up your booth takes coordination, and knowing the rules in advance will save you time onsite. Be sure to review updates in the [Monthly Exhibitor e-Letters](#) and keep these key points in mind:

- ✓ **Exhibitor Service Center**

Located at the rear of Hall E, this is your hub for help onsite and to connect with official AAOS 2026 vendors.

- ✓ **Hand-Carrying Booth Materials**

You may transport small items to your booth by hand through the front doors as long as it can be carried by one person and do not require the use of a cart or any type of equipment. Parking in the dock area to unload is not permitted.

- ✓ **Product Set-up**

All booths must be fully installed by 5:00 PM on Monday, March 2, 2026. On Tuesday morning, March 3, you may place products or stock literature, but booth installation is not permitted.

- ✓ **Empty Container Storage**

Save time later by prepping crates as you unpack. Pick up storage labels from the Freeman desk in the Exhibitor Service Center so empties are removed quickly and returned at move-out.

- ✓ **Storage Behind Booths**

Storage of any kind is prohibited inside the display area, behind the drape or display wall. If needed, storage is available for items that need to be accessed during the meeting. [View the Accessible Storage rates.](#)

- ✓ **Booth Construction Orders**

Place [orders](#) for booth construction, labor, and furnishings prior to arriving onsite and the deadline to take advantage of the discounted prices.

- ✓ **Booth Orders & Services**

If you run into issues with booth construction, labor, furnishings, or services such as AV, floral, or internet, visit the Exhibitor Service Center for assistance. Staff can help resolve problems and process any additional orders (note that onsite rates apply if deadlines were missed).

- ✓ **Exhibitor Insurance Requirement**

All AAOS 2026 exhibitors are required to carry Commercial General Liability Insurance. Exhibitors must provide their own compliant Certificate of Insurance or purchase a policy from the official Annual Meeting vendor by **February 4, 2026**. Exhibitors who are not compliant will not receive badges until proof of insurance is on file. For more details, review the Exhibitor Insurance Requirements on pages 16-17 of the [Exhibit Prospectus](#).

- ✓ **Labor**

Exhibit installation and dismantling at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center are subject to local union regulations. These rules determine what work your staff can perform and when you are required to hire union labor.

Before beginning setup, review the [Union Rules and Regulations](#) so you know what is permitted. Ordering labor in advance is recommended to avoid delays or higher onsite rates. If questions arise, assistance is available at the Exhibitor Service Center.



Don't wait until move-in to sort out labor needs. Having the right crew scheduled ahead of time prevents costly downtime and keeps your installation on track.

EXTRA
TIPS



✓ Exhibitor-Appointed Contractors (EACs)

Only approved EACs will have access to the Exhibit Hall. Instructions regarding hours, wristbands for access to the hall, and other details will be sent to all approved EACs prior to the meeting. [Visit the EAC Guidelines for the approval form and full requirements.](#)



Submit the EAC Approval Form early. Without approval, your contractor will not be permitted to access the floor, and your company will be required to hire labor onsite.

✓ Onsite Payment Information

Freeman requires a valid method of payment on file to process any onsite orders or resolve balances. Visit the Exhibitor Service Center if you need to update or provide payment information.



Authorize your credit card with Freeman before move-in. Having payment set up in advance makes it faster and easier to process final charges, saving time during move-out.

Installation Insights

Set-Up

- Use carriers that specialize in trade show logistics
- Bring a list of tracking numbers to the meeting
- Exhibiting at multiple meetings? Talk to your carrier about potential volume discounts. Freeman offers round-trip bundle rates for most shows.
- Air conditioning and heating may not be turned on during move-in; be sure to dress accordingly
- Be sure to submit or purchase a compliant COI for your exhibit booth so your onsite representatives will be allowed access to the meeting.



Upon Arrival to Your Booth Space

- Take inventory of what was shipped and delivered
- Get in touch with Freeman if you have any questions about your services
- Empty and label containers – they are not accessible during the meeting
 - Avoid sending valuables to empty storage during the meeting
 - Pick up “Empty” Labels at the Exhibitor Service Center

Reduce Labor Costs By

- Ordering labor in advance to secure discount rates
- Diagramming your setup and numbering crates accordingly – Include electrical needs and repacking instructions
- Prewiring equipment and organizing/color-coding all wires
- Providing a mobile contact number for any questions that arise during set-up

Invoicing & Payment

- Outbound shipping information and labels are available prior to and at the meeting
- Be prepared – take care of all invoices prior to the end of AAOS 2026
- Remember to submit your invoices and expenses to avoid any issues

Booth Staff Etiquette

The Annual Meeting offers a great opportunity to share your products and services with potential clients. But creating an eye-catching booth display is only one element of success. To attract attendees to your booth, your staff will need to know the rules for trade show booth etiquette. Follow these ideas and suggestions to prepare booth staff in appropriate conduct will make the difference between a lead and a lost opportunity.

✓ How to Greet People at a Trade Show

What's the most important part of trade show booth etiquette? It all starts with an enthusiastic greeting. Making a strong first impression is the key to attracting attendees to your exhibit booth. Be sure to smile and make eye contact to make attendees feel welcome. Your staff should warmly introduce themselves and the business by name before explaining the available products and services. Never underestimate the value of a strong handshake and be sure to thank attendees for their time after they visit your booth.

✓ Body Language Tips

When it comes to body language, your booth staff needs to follow a few simple recommendations. This is trade show booth staff etiquette 101:

- Express openness and warmth. Think of yourself as a host.
- Stand up straight (if you are physically able). Sitting suggests idleness or lethargy.
- Avoid crossing your arms or putting hands in pockets.
- Keep yourself from fidgeting and other nervous movements.
- Never turn your back to an attendee.
- Remember to smile.
- Keep your attention on potential visitors, not other booths.
- Actively listen while an attendee is speaking.

**ACTIVELY
LISTEN WHILE
AN ATTENDEE IS
SPEAKING.**



✓ **How to Stay Focused on the Show Floor**

For a good return on investment, your team will have to spend its time efficiently on the exhibit floor. They will need specific instructions to stay focused, including talking points to hit upon and introductory phrases that will attract attendees to your booth. Giving staff specific tasks and goals will minimize distractions.

Your booth staff should not spend a significant amount of time chatting with people from other exhibit booths. While some networking opportunities may arise, they are more likely to waste time that could be used pitching to prospective clients.

It is important to remember to schedule break time for those staffing the booth. Your booth staff needs to be alert and energized, and taking adequate breaks helps to ensure that. An attentive staff on the exhibit floor will send an inviting, welcoming message to attendees. Proper booth staffing is also necessary to guarantee your team isn't tired and overworked. Using a booth staff schedule template can be helpful.



Schedule your most knowledgeable, engaging team members during the dedicated exhibit hours, when attendee traffic is at its peak.

✓ **Eating in the Booth**

Your booth staff should not eat or drink while staffing the booth. It distracts the staff from giving potential clients their full attention -- and it's just plain unprofessional. Even chewing gum is a major no-no for trade show booth staff etiquette. You don't want any half-consumed food, empty water bottles or wrappers littering the display. However, it's important to keep staff from getting too hungry or dehydrated while working. Staff should use their break time to recharge with food or water away from the booth. Company-branded reusable bottles are also a great way to stay hydrated while keeping trash off your booth.

✓ **How to Train Your Booth Staff**

Your booth staff should be equipped with a set of talking points about your business. Utilizing a pitch prepared in advance will ensure your team sends a unified message to all attendees. The team does not need to read the script verbatim but should remember the key details to hit upon with each prospective client.

Your script shouldn't be a monologue, however -- you're aiming to start a conversation with attendees. To achieve this, prepare open-ended questions that will get attendees thinking about the ways in which your products and services would be useful to them. You want to get them talking about their business needs so you can share how your business can help. Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a yes or no. That will only halt the dialogue.

✓ **How Should My Booth Staff Dress?**

Your booth staff's attire should be clean and professional. With long hours spent standing, comfortable shoes are a must, but make sure they are still professional and clean. Your appearance sends an immediate message to attendees.

✓ **Closing Strong at a Trade Show**

Whether or not a team member manages to get a lead or close a sale, every attendee should walk away from the booth feeling that they were treated with respect. That's where the send-off comes in. Be sure to thank each attendee for their time and offer any informational material that you've prepared, along with a business card.

Time to Put Your Staff Etiquette into Action!!

Post-Meeting Follow-up

The meeting may be over, but your work isn't finished. The days and weeks immediately after AAOS are when attendee interest is at its peak. How you follow up now will determine whether booth conversations turn into real business opportunities.



Follow Up with Leads (Top Priority)

Leads collected onsite are your most valuable outcome --don't let them go cold.

- Reach out within the first week while you're still fresh in attendees' minds.
- Personalize your outreach by referencing the product or service they asked about in your booth.
- Finalize open purchase orders quickly.
- Keep current customers engaged with a thank-you note or check-in to reinforce your relationship between events.



Extend Your Marketing Reach

Not every attendee made it to your booth --but you can still reach them.

- Send a post-meeting email campaign with subject lines like *"Sorry We Missed You!"* or *"Did You Forget to Stop By?"*
- Launch a post-meeting social media campaign highlighting booth activities, new products, or key takeaways.
- Share sales sheets, product brochures, or digital demos with both new leads and existing clients.



Stay Visible Through AAOS Channels

AAOS offers ways to continue your visibility even after the Exhibit Hall closes.

- Consider purchasing the [post-meeting attendee list](#) for direct mail outreach.
- Advertise in orthopaedic publications such as [JAAOS](#), [AAOS Now](#), or [Headline News](#).
- Place ads on the [AAOS Annual Meeting web pages](#) to keep your company in front of attendees long after the show.
- Extend your brand impact by exhibiting at or sponsoring an [AAOS CME course](#). These specialty-focused events provide direct, intimate engagement with orthopaedic surgeons and professionals throughout the year.



Schedule a team debrief within one week of returning home. Review the leads you collected, assess which marketing tactics worked best, and document lessons learned. This will sharpen your strategy and set you up for an even stronger presence at AAOS 2027.



Reflect On Your Meeting Experience

Measure Your Success

The best way to improve your results year after year is to evaluate them honestly. Start by comparing your actual outcomes against the objectives you set before the meeting. Did you hit your targets for leads, brand visibility, or customer connections? Which strategies worked, and which fell flat?

Conduct Post-Meeting Review

Schedule a post-meeting review session with your team to discuss into your findings and reflect on the overall experience. Consider the following questions during your discussion, encompassing your pre-meeting, onsite, and post-meeting efforts:

- ✓ What aspects of our participation went smoothly, and what areas can we enhance? What valuable lessons did we learn?
- ✓ What innovative ideas do we want to incorporate into next year's event?
- ✓ Did we successfully connect with our targeted attendees?
- ✓ How many leads did we generate, and what was the quality of those leads?
- ✓ Did our achieved metrics align with our predetermined goals? If not, what were the contributing factors?
- ✓ What new insights did we gain from the experience?
- ✓ Are there any untapped resources we should consider utilizing for future events?
- ✓ Were we satisfied with our booth location, or do we wish to explore alternative options for next year?
- ✓ Did our booth space meet our needs this year, or would adding more space next year better support our goals?

Why it matters

By reflecting as a team and analyzing your results, you'll gain insights to refine your strategy, avoid repeating mistakes, and build a stronger presence at future AAOS meetings.



Start Preparing for AAOS 2027

Use the information and discussions from your post-meeting reflections to start forming your goals and strategies for next year's meeting. Before you know it, the planning begins for AAOS 2027 in Las Vegas, NV!

Final Thoughts

As you gear up for AAOS 2026, remember that the effort you invest before, during, and after the meeting directly shapes the outcomes you'll see. The Annual Meeting is an unmatched opportunity to connect with orthopaedic surgeons and healthcare professionals, but with hundreds of companies vying for attention, success depends on how well you prepare and how clearly you define your goals.

Ask yourself these key questions as you finalize your plans:

- What does success at AAOS 2026 mean for your company? Is it leads, new partnerships, brand awareness, or a mix of all three?
- How will you use the resources and tools available to you, including this guide, to bring that vision to life?
- What will distinguish your presence from the many others on the floor? Is it your messaging, booth design, staff interactions, or a creative in-booth experience?
- How will your brand come to life in your space? Attendees are drawn to experiences that feel authentic and memorable.

By asking these questions and planning with intention, you will position yourself for a memorable and impactful presence at AAOS 2026.

We look forward to supporting your success and seeing the strategies you bring to life in New Orleans.

-AAOS Exhibits Team



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Important Links




[AAOS 2026 Exhibits Home Page](#)



[Exhibitor Housing](#)




[Exhibit Hall Schedule](#)




[Exhibit Hall Floor Plan](#)




[Exhibitor Resource Center](#)




[Priority Points](#)



[Exhibitor Service Manual](#)



[Promotional Opportunities](#)



[Exhibitor Event and Meeting Space Guidelines](#)



[Exhibitor FAQ](#)

