Choose Your Event Format

# A. Choose a Format for Your Event Considering Event Goals and Participants

Whether your event type is a conference, meeting, or training, there are three recognized event formats:

* **Onsite**: participants are in-person at a single location.
* **Virtual**: participants join remotely through virtual technology.
* **Hybrid**: some participants gather in one or more locations and some participants join remotely.

This section can be used to help event coordinators decide on the format for a specific event by considering the intended purpose, outcome(s), and location(s) of participants.

## Define purpose and goals for event:

* Why are you having this event?
* What would a successful event look like to you?

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| **Event Examples** | **Suggested Event Format** |
| Share information with geographically dispersed participants | Virtual |
| Requires intense interaction between people (e.g., team-building for a new team) | Onsite |
| Gather input, brainstorm ideas, and/or make decisions with people at different locations | Virtual |
| Complex series of multi-day plenary sessions and/or concurrent breakout groups with hundreds of participants and presenters | Virtual or Hybrid |
| Face-to-face interaction is critical for decision-making | Onsite |
| You want to reduce travel costs, lost time to travel, and/or forgo greenhouse gas emissions | Virtual |
| Regular meetings with a team or group that is geographically dispersed (e.g., weekly-monthly) | Virtual |

## Define participants:

* Who will participate? Think: Must haves, should haves, nice to haves.
* Are there others who would benefit from participating?

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| **Event Examples** | **Suggested Event Format** |
| Most participants are in the same office or are local | Onsite |
| Some participants are in one locality while others are geographically dispersed | Hybrid |
| Periodic face-to-face meetings are critical for continued relationship-building among a team or group | Onsite |
| Attendees are geographically dispersed and the event is one day or less in length | Virtual |
| Individuals do not need to participate in the whole event live (e.g., they only participate in part of the live event or may watch a recording instead) | Virtual or Hybrid |
| You would like to open the event to more participants than could travel | Virtual or Hybrid |
| Greater than 50% of attendees are local, with a large component of other attendees geographically dispersed | Hybrid |

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# B. Pros and Cons of Different Event Formats

This section provides pros, cons, and examples for each format.

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| **Event Format** | **Pros** | **Cons** | **Forest Service Examples** |
| **Onsite**: participants are in-person at a single location | * Face-to-face interaction increases relationship and/ or team- building * Easier to keep participants engaged | * Higher cost * Requires travel with overnight stay(s) * Administrative burden to arrange meeting rooms, hotel rooms, and get event approval * Higher greenhouse gas emissions | * NFS Regional Office review of a National Forest * Training that requires “hands-on” practice (e.g., chainsaw training) * Team building and meetings that require face-to-face interactions |
| **Virtual:** participants join remotely through virtual technology | * No travel costs and related travel time * Reduced greenhouse gas emissions * Greater work- life flexibility * Allows the most participants | * Need to learn about and leverage technology * If capacity/skills are not available on staff for hosting virtual events, may require hiring that expertise to host events | * Leadership Forums with hundreds of participants, multiple speakers, opportunity for input, and breakout discussions * All Hands CIO monthly web meeting * Monthly Knowledge Sharing and Conservation webinars * Training for employees by CIO, HRM, GSTC, and RSAC (often provided live and on-demand) |
| **Hybrid:**  some participants gather in one or more locations and some participants join remotely | * Reduced travel costs and related travel time * Reduced greenhouse gas emissions * Allows more participants than an onsite event | * Increased preparation and logistics to provide for both in- person and virtual participants * Need to learn about and leverage technology * If capacity/skills are not available on staff for hosting virtual events component, may require hiring that expertise | * Sustainable Operations Summits where small numbers of local participants and presenters gather in one location and hundreds of others participate and present remotely in a multi-day conference with plenary speakers, concurrent sessions, blogging, and networking opportunities * NFS WO Employee All Hands Meeting with 100 virtual participants and 100 onsite participants |

**Note**: For resources and tools for planning and hosting green and accessible onsite, virtual, and hybrid events, refer to the [Greening Your Events, Resources & Support](http://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency/greening-your-events/resources-support) web page.