NATIONAL ENERGY & UTILITY AFFORDABILITY COALITION

**Prepared by MSI team members on the conference team.*

Summary

The 2025 NEUAC Annual Conference, themed "Revved Up", was held in Charlotte, NC, at the Westin Charlotte. The city offered a lively atmosphere with numerous events before and after the conference. Attendance included 642 on-site participants, including attendees, exhibitors, speakers, and guests, with a total of 652 registered. The weather was excellent, with rain only on the final day fitting transition to introduce Seattle as the 2026 host city. The well attended board meeting kicked off the Monday and then moved into preconference sessions. Attendees were officially welcomed on Monday night in the exhibitor spaces with a hometown-themed reception and the chance for attendees to wear something that showed their hometown - i.e., baseball caps.

Conference Highlights:

- Plenary Sessions: 4 in total, including a keynote by Diana Hernandez and her book discussion session that followed up her plenary session. We sold copies of her book onsite with a local vendor and she graciously signed books.
- Panel Session: Collaboration with AGA featuring 5+ panel speakers was a plenary session.
- Dialogue with the FEDs: Conducted remotely in the plenary session. A glitch with visuals on the zoom call and AV glitch but the message was heard and felt in the room of 700 pp.
- Pre-Conference Workshops: 5 offered, including the return of Santele's Healing Circles.
- Breakout Sessions: Up to 9 concurrent sessions in smaller rooms were offered this year, allowing for focused discussions in small.
- Huddles: Dialog-focused sessions with no AV, encouraging intimate discussions. Huddle were a new addition to the schedule.
- Post Cons - Deep Dive Sessions: 6 offered including Poverty Simulation on the last day of the conference.
- Pause for Paws: Puppies on site after the plenary sessions and were a huge hit on Day 2.

Other Notes:

- Hotel + attendance was affected by travel restrictions and the new administration.
- Charlotte proved to be a walkable and engaging city for conference participants.
- Minor league baseball game was an evening outing and walkable from the hotel.
- NODA Night was offered - the chance for attendees to explore the city - new this year.

The following list of best practices offers highlights of the preparation and the conference activities.

Plenary Session: Best Practices and Recommendations

- Diversify the speakers by doing a panel if possible.
- In person rehearsals needed - allows the speaker the chance to view the ppt/videos, walk the stage and know the space and how to use the microphone.

Hotel & Meeting Space – Westin Charlotte

The meeting space at the Westin Charlotte was excellent and provided a smooth flow throughout the conference. Overall, the space facilitated efficient navigation, a variety of session formats, and strong visibility for sponsors. Key details include:

- General Session Room: Large room set in landscape layout with rounds of 10; accommodated plenaries comfortably.
- AV & Stage Setup:
    - Four screens for AV
    - Stage: 16' x 24' x 24" riser at the front of the room
    - Video podium featuring rotating sponsor logos for meal functions.
- Breakout Rooms:
    - Nine concurrent sessions are all located on one floor below the general session.
    - Mix of classroom and theatre setups, offering flexibility for session types
- Venue Layout: Two floors with a mix of large and small rooms, enabling multiple sessions simultaneously and accommodating diverse session needs.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Move Speaker room away from NEUAC offices.
- Rehearsals are needed for plenary sessions.
- Keep a Double U set up in the room for Board meeting.
- Breakout room setup should be 100% complete 2.5 hours before first session.
- Place short throw projectors on small, draped tables when possible.

Audio Visual & Technical Summary

We outsourced AV with Tech Factory resulting in over $55K in savings. Stage, lighting, and projector/screen setups looked professional, including potential for rear projection if budget allows. Short throw projectors should be placed on small, draped tables when possible. Use a checklist to review each room with the AV lead well before the first session—develop during pre-show calls. Safety: all trip hazards with yellow or yellow-and-black tape should be used.

Encore managed power and Wi-Fi needs effectively.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- RFP Process: Plan another AV RFP and conduct interviews at the planning meeting.
- Speaker Timers: Provide them but note that in 2025 no one used them.
- Equipment Maintenance: Change batteries in all microphones and slide advancers daily.
- Staffing: Have 3 AV floaters onsite for troubleshooting.
- Presentation Management: Review presentation file folders on LT desktops with AV team before the first session to facilitate smooth room transitions, especially in afternoon sessions with only 15 minutes to reset 8–9 rooms.
- Zoom/Virtual Presentations: Ensure AV team runs PPT best practices.
- Rehearsals: Conduct rehearsals for all plenary sessions.
- Music Integration: Plan for a separate audio board to manage music features effectively.
- We reduced the bandwidth of the WIFI to save on costs.

Food & Beverage

Overall, the food was delicious. The hotel did a super job with buffet lines. The entree (chicken) was repeated twice on the menu due to budget constraints. The hotel outlet, however, was not prepared for our group dining on Monday at lunch after the board meeting. Guests appreciated early breakfast options, including yogurt and other protein choices.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- For the board meeting, consider providing a boxed lunch. The hotel restaurant was not prepared.
- Include additional protein options for breakfast to meet attendee preferences.
- If possible, consider an offsite for one lunch for cost savings but we need to ensure area has ample food outlets and we meet FB minimums.

Housing

We had a mix of room types and rates. We did have a shortfall of rooms and had to pay attrition. We were able to offer comps to guests we invited to attend the awards.

Charlotte, NC 2025	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	TOTAL	Comment
	5/30/2025	5/31/2025	6/1/2025	6/2/2025	6/3/2025	6/4/2025	6/5/2025		pre Con and Board
Contracted	24	126	442	598	598	563	156	2507	219/239/299
Addendum	24	102	316	598	598	563	156	2357	Tues- Thur conference
	4%	17%	53%	100%	100%	94%	26%		
ACTUAL	1	6	245	512	523	469	68	1824	
		1%	*47%*	*98%*	*100%*	*90%*	*13%*	77%	**61 room shortfall**

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Continue to monitor the hotel room block and review right after the annual conference to make any adjustments for the future conference.

Exhibitors

After a slow start with sign up, we did get more signed up. We offered discounted rates.
Exhibitor | Pre and Onsite

- Worked Well
    - Personalized communication via email and phone was highly effective in building rapport and ensuring smooth coordination.
    - Whova platform was set up in a timely manner and provided a useful tool for both exhibitor engagement and attendee interaction.
    - The Exhibitor Passport program successfully encouraged attendee interaction at each booth, which exhibitors appreciated.
    - Booth placement near registration and the welcome reception created high visibility and steady foot traffic.
- Room for Improvement
    - Begin outreach and research for exhibitor recruitment earlier, particularly with an eye toward the many solar companies, tribal organizations, and related groups based in the greater Seattle area.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Maintain more frequent and consistent communication with exhibitors leading up to the event.
- Recognize that exhibitors have varying levels of tech-savviness—consider offering tailored support accordingly.
- Host a pre-event call with all exhibitors to review Whova setup, event logistics, and answer any outstanding questions.

Exhibitor Package Recommendations

- Revamp the sheet with more information to prepare the exhibitors.

General Details:

- Venue Name & Address - Include full location with map links and local contact info.
- Event Dates & Times - Clearly outline the full conference schedule and exhibitor-specific hours.
- Move-In & Move-Out Times - Include loading dock instructions and setup/teardown hours.
- Exhibit Hours - List out when booths should be staffed and open to attendees.
- Key Deadlines **-**Early bird registration, Whova profile completion, shipping deadlines, etc.

Shipping & Handling Info

- FedEx / UPS / Carrier Instructions - Provide address, labeling format, and deadlines for shipping.
- On-Site Package Handling - Explain where to pick up shipments and any fees or check-in steps.
- Whova Platform Guide Access & Setup Instructions - Step-by-step instructions for logging in and creating a booth profile.
- Best Practices for Engagement Tips on how exhibitors can maximize visibility: Upload logos, videos, and product brochures, enable live chat and giveaways, monitor attendee engagement analytics.

Venue & Booth Layout

- Floor Plan of Exhibit Space:
  Clearly marked booth locations, traffic flow, and key areas (registration, food, restrooms).
- Booth Layout & Specs:
  Dimensions, including furniture, power/Wi-Fi info, and customization options.
- Conference Agenda: Sessions, keynotes, receptions, and networking opportunities.

Distribution

- Distribute the full Exhibitor Package no later than two weeks prior to the conference to all registered exhibitors. This ensures exhibitors have ample time to review logistics, complete setup requirements (e.g., Whova profile, shipping), and prepare for the event.
- Follow up with each exhibitor after package delivery to confirm receipt, answer any outstanding questions, address specific needs or concerns (tech support, shipping, booth logistics, etc.)

Communications:

We did send emails weekly to the main list announcing different topics and promoting the conference. Having a preliminary weekly content outline helped clarify what should and should not be posted. Preparing communications in advance of weekly client meetings provided time for feedback and revisions, improving overall efficiency and quality.

Best Practices and Recommendations

For 2026, it is recommended to develop a comprehensive communications plan early in the planning process that targets both potential attendees and exhibitors. This plan should include a consistent weekly communication schedule—ideally on the same day and time each week—to help set expectations and boost engagement. Creative engagement tactics, such as a "Read Your Email" game that includes clues about Seattle with a chance to win prizes, can help increase open rates and excitement. Begin building buzz around keynote speakers and major sessions well in advance to drive early interest.

Additionally, establish a detailed communications calendar with input from the full planning team, and consider creating a separate, tailored timeline specifically for exhibitor communications. All "Know Before You Go" (KBYG) messages, whether for the main event or ancillary activities, should be sent simultaneously for clarity and consistency.

Sponsorship
We were fortunate with many sponsors again this year. The charging station was a success again. We did branded lanyards this year and had a NEUAC logo noted. Sponsors recognized on the website and onsite.

Printed Materials: Save-the-Date, Marketing Brochure, Conference Program
Reduced the number of items to print and we did digital options for the Save the Date and the conference program.

Speaker & Moderator Management
Content calls: Despite being time-consuming, feedback was consistently positive. The earlier start of the process this year improved organization and planning. Cvent upload for presentations streamlined distribution and access**.**

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Presentation fonts: Inconsistent formatting caused occasional readability issues.
- Timely uploads: Presentations were not always uploaded on schedule. Assigning one speaker or the moderator to upload could simplify tracking and reduce reminders.
- Tracking scholarships and comp rooms: Responsibility for management was unclear.
- Early Communication: Continue engaging speakers early in the planning process.
- Presentation Deadlines: Set deadlines further out to allow adequate rehearsal preparation.
- Single Upload Responsibility: Assign one speaker or the moderator to upload presentations.
- Submission Timing: All PPTs and videos should be submitted no later than the Friday before the conference to allow for rehearsal prep.

Speaker Room
- Room location is too close to NEUAC offices.
- Added a screen and projector this year - only used twice.
- Snacks are always a hit!

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Relocate the speaker room away from main offices.
- Add a printer for onsite convenience.
- AV items in the room - used 1 - not sure if needed.

Pre-Conference and Post Sessions
- Well attended and larger rooms were a plus.
- Nice variety
- Poverty Simulation offered a deep dive - numbers were slow going into the conference.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- For 2026 suggest hosting as many as possible as attendees may arrive early to the West
- The 2026 week will lead to the holiday weekend and need to determine which sessions to offer on Thursday. Find ways for people to stay - Raffle!

Attendee Registration & Payment Management

REGISTRATION AS OF June 11, 2025 (POST EVENT)	
Registration Type	**Totals**
Corporation	38
Government	102
Non-Profit	307
Tribal Nation	39
Utilities (incl. municipal utilities/public power)	152
Total Attendees (staff not included)	638
Event Staff (NEUAC/MSI/Tight ship)	14
No Shows	10
Cancellations	27

Total Registrants + Event Attendance

- 652 total registered, 642 total attended, 98.5% checked in.

Registration Revenue

- Including Event Staff: 79.92% of attendees paid for their registration with an average revenue of $744.93 per guest.
    - 652 total registrants, 135 complimentary registrations, 517 paid registrations
- Excluding Event Staff: 81.03% of attendees paid for their registration with an average revenue of $761.28 per guest.
    - 638 total registrants, 121 complimentary registrations, 517 paid registrations

Cvent was the online registration tool used for the conference. We opened registration on March 17 and continued to take registration the week going to the conference. We accepted checks and credit card options and used the Cvent payment portal.

Registration opened 12 weeks out on Monday, March 17 and 130 registered that week.

- Early bird rates ended April 15, and we had 426 registered.
- 70% nonprofit/government/tribe; 30% utility/corporate.
- 19% were complimentary registrations - scholarships, sponsorships, exhibitors, and select speakers.
- Baseball Tickets: 218 tickets were sold.
- NoDa Night: 210 tickets were sold.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Continue using Cvent as the registration tool as this has all past date.
- Limit complimentary registrations.
- Post the registration fees and meal costs a month or more before registration opens.
- Lots of check payments

	Charlotte		
		June 2 - 6, 2025	
	As Of	Weekly	Total
Site Went Live	March 17, 2025		
Early Bird Ends	April 15th, 2025		
Reg Rate Ends	May 16th, 2025		
12 weeks out	03-13-25	1	1
11 weeks out	03-20-25	129	130
10 weeks out	03-27-25	87	217
9 weeks out	04-03-25	52	269
8 weeks out	04-10-25	61	330
7 weeks out	04-17-25	96	426
6 weeks out	04-24-25	51	477
5 weeks out	05-01-25	60	537
4 weeks out	05-08-25	40	577
3 weeks out	05-15-25	26	603
2 weeks out	05-22-25	30	633
1 week out	05-29-25	12	645
Week Of	06-05-25	7	652
Post Event			
	Total	652	

Admission Type	Totals	Complimentary Registrations
Corporate/Utility NEUAC Member	151	60
Corporate/Utility NEUAC Non-Member	35	12
Non-Profit Government/Tribe NEUAC Member	285	27
Non-Profit Government/Tribe Non-Member	150	11
Attendee One Day Registration	17	11
Internal Tallies	**Totals**	
Speaker	126	
Exhibitor	12	
Sponsor	64	

Optional Items	Quantity Sold	Received	Outstanding	Total Gross
Sister Pat Kelly	5	$400.00	$0.00	$400.00
NoDa Night	210	$2,100.00	$0.00	$2,100.00
Baseball Game	218	$10,250.00	$0.00	$10,250.00
Total		$12,750.00	$0.00	$12,750.00

Check Summary	
Number of Attendees Paying via Check	85
Amount to Receive Via Check	$75,120.00
Number of Checks Received	85
Amount Received via Checks Collected	$75,120.00
Balance to be Paid	$0.00

Onsite Registration

TCA onsite was a wonderful resource and helped direct attendees into the breakout rooms as well as check attendees in. Name badges were double sided and had a QR code for attendees to network and gather contact information and included the city/state on name badges. TCA was a huge asset this year with volunteers and assisting with registration, directional staffing, and setting up for the reception.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Make sure people attending the board meeting are getting checked in to Whova.
- Make sure board attendees are checked in on Whova + marked off on paper for reconciling.
- Figure out a way to generate QR codes for badges onsite.
- To avoid ancillary activity purchases flying under the radar, disable registration modification permissions once onsite, so attendees can only adjust their registration by coming to the help desk and having it done manually by the registration manager.
- Keep the tall registration signs.

Conference by Numbers

Admission Type	TOTAL
Corporate/Utility NEUAC Member	151
Corporate/Utility Non-Member	35
Non-Profit Government/Tribe NEUAC Member	285
Non-Profit Government/Tribe Non-Member	150
Attendee One day Pass	17

Speakers	126
Sponsor	64
Exhibitor	12
Staff	14

Registration Stats	
Total	652
First timers	Not available - did not ask question this year
Highest three states	Washington - 42
	Michigan - 39
	California - 37
Furthest traveled	Alaska
Corp/Utility vs Non-Profit	186 vs 435
Member vs Non-Member	435 vs 185
Number of States Represented	44
Not represented	Kentucky, Hawaii, Maine, Nevada, Vermont, West Virginia

Conference Mobile App

Whova was the conference APP utilized this year. A few more features were used.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- Keep using this tool for the exhibitors.
- Determine a method to make changes/add people to whova onsite.
    - Different emails
    - Onsite Add Process
- Inform attendees of speaker slides in Whova - people were going to registration to print slides.
    - Review 2025 APP features ahead of time

Congratulation to NEUAC for a successful conference!