



CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE



PURPOSE

Traveling is both fun and difficult. Between meeting registration deadlines and reserving transportation, details can be easily overlooked. This guide is here to provide insights to help chapters plan better for conferences, to share insights conference events so that members can enjoy as many opportunities as possible, and to impart some knowledge of the travel industry.

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SUGGESTIONS?

Please email activities@missourifbla.org to suggest an edit to this document or to add an item for the next version. Please include the name of the specific guide and/or sub-section in the email heading and body. Missouri FBLA-PBL appreciates the input!

Disclaimer: Missouri FBLA-PBL is not responsible for the content nor maintenance of the external URLs provided. The links are meant to lead to more information and to aid chapters in developing their own projects and connections. Missouri FBLA-PBL is not receiving any benefit from providing the names of businesses nor associations to you.

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MIDDLE LEVEL (ML) CONFERENCES

Welcome to Missouri Middle Level (ML) for middle school members!

ML FLEX

The year 2013-14 marked the beginning of Missouri Middle Level (ML). That year saw the first officer team, and state membership has been booming since. ML SLC has outgrown the EXPO Center during FBLA SLC (2015 & 2016), had its own day in Springfield, and now had its first year at the Hilton Garden Inn Convention Center in Columbia in March 2019. Missouri ML negotiates a discounted rate for chapters. Lunch and dinner were included. TeamTRI led large workshops on icebreakers and team-building.

The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/mlslc/>.

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The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/mlslc/>.



ML NLC

The first occurrence of Middle Level (ML) National Leadership Conference (NLC) took place at FBLA NLC 2018 in Baltimore, MD. It is held in conjunction with the FBLA NLC at the end of June into July (before Independence Day). More information and opportunities at ML NLC can be found with the FBLA NLC information.

The link has the latest information: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/conferences/nlc>.

PHI BETA LAMBDA (PBL) CONFERENCES

Welcome to Missouri Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) for college and university members!

PBL FLEX

Started in 2018, the MO PBL Fall Leadership Experience (FLEX) is a free leadership experience for up to 4 members from every collegiate chapter in Missouri. This two-day event is a great way to begin networking with the state officers and other members by starting their year off right with chapter management aide and even business tours. The MO PBL State Officers are very excited to grow the leadership of local chapters. Food and lodging are included; chapters only need to find a way to Jefferson City.



The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/pbl-flex/>.

PBL CCC

Visiting a bustling city and building a nation-wide network are two of the many benefits of the National PBL Career Connection Conference (CCC). Started in 2018, CCC is a two-day experience held in late October and has occurred in New York City (NYC or The Big Apple) the last two years. Attendees tour famous businesses around New York like The Broadway League, Merrill-Lynch, and others. CCC includes free professional headshots, résumé review, and an internship panel. Workshops also provide insights on interview tips, LinkedIn, and business communication.

The link has the latest information: fbla-pbl.org/conference/pbl-career-connections/.

PBL SLC

Missouri collegiate members compete in up to three (3) events at their State Leadership Conference (SLC) the Friday before FBLA SLC. These members go straight to state (no districts) and perform in front of local business owners and FBLA-PBL alumni. Past break-out sessions (workshops) provided by the MO PBL State Officers have included the following: leader hacks, time management, team work, event planning, and workplace yoga. Lunch and dinner is included in registration.



The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/pblslc/>.

PBL NLC

Just before the FBLA National Leadership Conference (NLC), the collegiate PBL members have their turn to compete and to impress judges from across the nation in up to two (2) events. Workshops and business tours are available along with discounted lodging. Meals are not included. Travel Scholarships are available. PBL NLC attendees can arrive a few days earlier and participate in the Institute for Leaders (IFL).

The links below have the latest information.

NLC: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/conferences/nlc>.

IFL: coming soon!

Scholarships: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/pbl/membership-benefits/scholarships>.

Past Winners: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/pbl/competitive-events/winners>

YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8L_3BaWyis-CbflaArtfGQ

MISSOURI SUMMER ADVISER INNOVATION CONFERENCE (MOSAIC)

After taking your students across the state, it's time to have a conference just for advisers. That's right: no students! The Missouri Summer Adviser Innovation Conference (MOSAIC) focuses on sharing tips from other advisers, leaders in the association, and presenters from TeamTRI. Filled with many workshops and some social activities, this is one of the easiest events to enjoy and receive great insights.

We encourage attendees to present a workshop if they have some ideas and tricks worth sharing. Previous and suggested workshop topics are noted below.

Travel Smarter
How to Place at NLC
Writing Reports
Presentation Tips
Fundraisers

Veterans Day Banquet
Unique Service Opportunities
Team-Building
Chapter Management
FBLA-PBL Foundations

The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/mosaic/>.



FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA (FBLA) CONFERENCES

Welcome to MO Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) for high school members!

FBLA SMLC

This conference is open to FBLA, ML, and PBL members across Missouri and is held at the largest amusement parks in the state: Worlds of Fun (Kansas City), Six Flags St. Louis (Eureka), and Silver Dollar City (Branson). Activities include education tours, practice competitive events (open tests), and a keynote meal. Lunch and shirt are included in the registration.

The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/smlc/>.

FBLA NFLC

This conference is open for ML as well. (PBL members attended too until 2017; 2018 saw the first Career Connections Conference for collegiate members.) This conference is a Friday to Saturday event filled with workshops on a variety of business topics. Sponsorship tables are present for students to meet with industry people as well. Missouri each year chooses a location where the state officers will be present, but chapters are welcome to choose the best location for them.

Past locations have included the following.

- 2019: Washington, D.C.; Denver, CO; and Birmingham, AL
- 2018: Chicago, IL; Charlotte, NC; and Albuquerque, NM
- 2017: St. Louis, MO; Buffalo, NY; and New Orleans, LA
- 2016: Daytona Beach, FL; Milwaukee, WI; and Dallas, TX
- 2015: Omaha, NE; Charleston, SC; and Baltimore, MD
- 2014: Washington, D.C.; Minneapolis, MN; and New Orleans, LA

The link has the latest information: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/conferences/nflc/>.

FBLA DLC

Missouri FBLA-PBL is divided into 20 individual Districts, each comprised of 15-30 area schools. Winners from each DLC advance on to compete at the State Leadership Conference (SLC). Each District is lead by a District Adviser (DA), who manages the competitive events and activities at their respective DLC. Activities may include elections, keynotes, workshops, and/or food. It takes a team of dedicated advisers and staff to pull off 20 conferences in a few short weeks.

The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/district-leadership-conferences/>.

FBLA SLC

This is the pinnacle of being a Missouri FBLA member. Over 4,300 members registrar for our largest event. Over the course of 2.5 days, members take education outside the classroom by competing, attending workshops, and gaining insight from the keynote speaker.



Attendees can also engage in one of many student opportunities: Buzz Squad, Service Squad, Cybris Internship, Senior Banquet, Specialized EDU, Leadership Labyrinth, College & Career Fair, and other activities.

The link has the latest information: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/fblaslc/>.

FBLA NLC

Right after the PBL National Leadership Conference (NLC), the 10k+ FBLA members have their turn to impress judges from across the nation in one (1) event. Workshops and conference internships are available along with discounted lodging. Meals are not included. Travel Scholarships are available. FBLA NLC attendees can arrive a few days earlier and participate in the Institute for Leaders (IFL).

To help MO competitors prepare for NLC, a Competitive Event Bootcamp is held in Fulton on Westminster's campus. Participants receive several rounds of feedback from FBLA-PBL alumni. The event is free and includes breakfast (doughnuts) and lunch (pizza). Participants must register though in order for Missouri FBLA-PBL to schedule their learning sessions.

Past locations have included the following.

- 2022: Chicago, IL
- 2021: Anaheim, CA
- 2020: Salt Lake C., UT
- 2019: San Antonio, TX
- 2018: Baltimore, MD
- 2017: Anaheim, CA
- 2016: Atlanta, GA
- 2015: Chicago, IL
- 2014: Nashville, TN
- 2013: Anaheim, CA
- 2012: San Antonio, TX
- 2011: Orlando, FL

The links below have the latest information.

MO Bootcamp: <http://missourifbla.org/conferences/nlc-bootcamp/>.

NLC: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/conferences/nlc>.

IFL: coming soon!

Conference Internship: coming soon!

Scholarships: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/fbla/membership-benefits/scholarships/>.

Past Winners: <https://www.fbla-pbl.org/fbla/competitive-events/winners>.

YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcR9Y4eVNL0kqKTt0HEZIOw>.

TRAIN

Amtrak (<https://www.amtrak.com/home>) offers nationwide transportation. Two (2) personal and (2) carry-on luggage pieces (total of 4) are included in the cost of the ticket. If looking to arrive in the center of the city, then trains are more convenient than flying. Trains are known to run behind, and Amtrak has a way to let riders track their train's delayed arrival. (They will say that trains can regain time, so best to stay at or near the station.) Free Wi-Fi is included for those who like to work and enjoy America's countryside.

Missouri specific information is found here: <https://www.modot.org/passenger-railroads>.

MOTOR VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, OR BUS)

Long before anyone gets into a motorized vehicle, some safety precautions should be taken. Below are some questions to ask administration.

- When was the vehicle last inspected?
- How many vehicles have already been requested for that day?
- How (if any) do mile reimbursement work?
- Who has a CDL (commercial driver's license) to operate the vehicle?
- Out of whose budget does overnight housing come for the vehicle driver (if different than adviser)?
- When was the last fill up, oil change, tire rotation, and vacuuming?
- Is the vehicle trusted to drive long distances?
- How do I get a hold of the school of roadside support in case of an emergency?

Driving to conferences is most often the most cost effective option for chapters. Some members enjoy being able to sit comfortably near friends, chat, or sleep without worry. Other members may try to read, finish homework, or play on a tablet to pass the time. Having a group of members together is a great time to bond with one another. If able to, offer brain teasers for them to decipher, mini decks of cards to play rummy on the bus seat, or a clever game of i-SPY. Furthermore, limit the quantity and size of the baggage in order for everyone to have ample space to sit.

If the bus has space, partner with another chapter to carpool to the event. It also provides space to meet other people and to share ideas on the road.

To be the real MVP during the trip, bring some power banks, car chargers, and cords for all battery types. The members will thank you.

A few days before the event, be sure to check weather conditions and road quality before leaving the parking lot. Rain, strong winds, and snow require more caution on the highway. Road resurfacing can narrow lanes, congest traffic, and lower speeds. On that note, avoid being in large cities around rush hour. Plan twenty (20) minutes every three

(3) hours to stretch legs or to pull over for a snack. If eating along the way, budget 1.5 hours. Lastly, many websites and apps let users know where to find the cheapest gas, so fill up while there.

AIRPLANE

The primary reason for air travel with Missouri FBLA-PBL is to FBLA-PBL NLC and to PBL CCC. For NLC, Missouri FBLA does its best to arrange air transport for high school members qualifying for NLC.

Here are some pointers to help ensure safe a successful flight.

- Ensure you have the correct spelling, location, and dates at every step of the booking process. Passengers may be denied boarding if all information isn't correct.
- Know the reputation of the airport through which you connect or arrive. Certain airports are highly rated which may increase delays or miscommunication.
- Give yourself 1 hour between connecting domestic flights.
- Use the same airline or agency for connecting flights. Otherwise, the airport may have passengers leave the terminal and go through security again.
- Full refund can be issued if canceled within 24 hours of booking (required by law).
- Call airline 7 & 3 days prior to confirm details (i.e. airport codes).
- Wear comfortable clothing; do not wear metal.
- The closer to the gate, the more you pay for luggage and other items.
- TSA (Transportation Safety Administration) normally doesn't have law enforcement authority.
- SPOT means Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques.

HOTEL

Booking a hotel for a conference is different than booking one for vacation. Most conventions contract with hotel(s) for a lower rate -- provided that the group or event can meet a minimum percentage pick-up or generate a minimum revenue. This is why some hotels are listed as preferred. These special rates expire before the event starts (normally a few weeks beforehand and referred to as the "cut-off" date). The special rates are also capped at how many rooms (and sometimes what room type) as detailed in the contract. If the contracted number of rooms have been reached, further reservations are not guaranteed unless addendum for more is signed by the event. Therefore, book the reservation(s) early.



Other times like NLC, the reservations are handled through a housing bureau which manages the reservations until a certain date. After that time, the reservations are sent to the hotel(s) for processing. Attendees can then contact their hotel to ask questions or to make modifications. Hotels cannot make a reservation for an event that is managed by a third party (housing bureaus or online travel agencies).



The contract for the event may require the hotel to provide things like the following: three-day cancellation (CXL) policy, non-refundable one-night deposit due at booking, early check-in, wifi, breakfast, amenities, complimentary rollaway beds, rebates, late check-outs, and early departure fee (EDF) if check-out date is moved up.

Online travel agencies (OTAs) are most often used for leisure travel and occasionally when event room blocks have filled up too. These are pre-paid, non-refundable opaque rates. These rates process through the hotels' reservation software as "suppressed" meaning they cannot quote you the rate originally paid to the OTA. People choose this route because it may be cheaper than purchasing the "rack rate" -- the highest price the hotel has for a given room type. Be wary that hotels are not likely to refund these purchases in the unlikely event of being unable to check into the hotel. Some hotels view these purchases as the guest taking a gamble with their time and money.

WHEN RESERVATIONS GO WRONG

Talking to "corporate" doesn't scare those who have been in the industry for a while. If you do find something incorrect, it is best to contact the local hotel immediately (unless its third party reservation). Below are some examples of hotel rooms gone wrong.

- Bad view, which should be the least of the worries
- DNA (Did Not Appear) fee for a late night arrival
- Far from transit options, convention center, or airport
- Elite rewards member taking too long to check out of assigned room
- Pre-blocked rooms but then a hygiene risk causes you to relocate kid(s)
- Lost in system (more often because of 3rd parties)
- Only having an acknowledgement number from 3rd party (I.e. PassKey and MeetingMax) but not an email from the hotel itself
- Wrong room type (may need rollaway bed)
- Incorrect rate (due to late booking or full room block)
- Overbooking meaning someone has a reservation now at new hotel ("walking")
- Near/far from elevator; Other guests being noisy around room
- Boys and girls in connecting rooms; Adults not on a floor or near kids

ASK THE CONCIERGE ... THE FRONT DESK, GUEST SERVICES, OR PBX

Can we pay by check? Tax exempt?
 What is the cancellation window?
 Are the rooms close together?
 What are the check-in/out times?
 Breakfast included?
 Mini-fridge & microwave included?

Wi-Fi, hotel phone, & printing?
 Is there a package handling fees?
 What are the parking options & cost?
 Is there a work-out space & pool?
 What's within 0.5 miles?
 What do the locals do?

FOOD

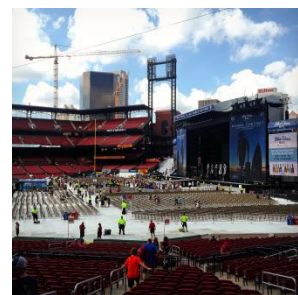
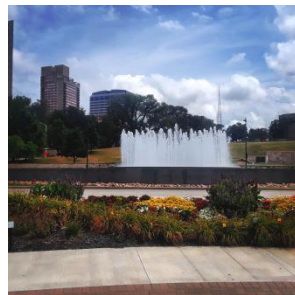
Cuisine varies region to region based on the local fare available there. Please encourage your students to try new things. For example, members can try burnt ends in Kansas City and toasted raviolis in St. Louis. Challenge members not to eat at a place you can choose at home (i.e. fast food). A harder challenge is to have a different cuisine (Mexican, Chinese, Italian, etc.) each night. Be cognizant of allergens, dietary restrictions, & preferences for all travelers.

Packing snacks for travel by car, bus, train, and plane can reduce the number of stops to make. Include 1-1.5 hours to eat into the travel time from Point A to Point B. Guess when the diner will be busy (or call to find the best time), and reserve a table in advance for groups larger than 4 people or during busy times. As always, tip the server fairly. Use blogs, Instagram, OpenTable, Yelp, etc. to find reviews of diners and to get excited about eating at that location.



TOURISM

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries (including hotels, restaurants, and attractions) and has become a vessel for economic development and for building peace. For many, this is someone's first job. (And for those who stay, they most often make less than their visitors -- meaning less than teachers). Tourism is more than big city and brand name attractions. It is the local mom-and-pop places too. Getting out and exploring the town allows chapters to make memories.



PACKING

The less that's packed, the less stress of remembering it all. Make it light; it's all right. Take too long; it's all wrong. Fitting belongings into a personal bag and a carry-on can save on the cost of a checked bag. Certain items are only permitted in a checked bag though.

Some items are necessary for travel: driver's license, passport, cash and/or credit, and tickets. Everyone should dress for success in professional business attire at conference events unless otherwise noted. Comfy professional shoes are a must. Too many shoes take up too much valuable space. Limit the number of casual outfits to half the number of days away from home. Hygiene items, water, and snacks are small items for which to make space. Electronics like cellphones, laptops, tablets, and their respected chargers may be necessary to prepare for and/or compete. Lastly, don't forget to save space for a souvenir or a trophy.

Before leaving home, take a picture of the contents within the bag and angles of the bag as well. This will help with a lost bag claim if necessary. Storing an itinerary inside the luggage will also be an indicator as to whom the items belong. Having a distinctive bag or luggage tag will help as items come across the baggage claim.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Long before people go anywhere, risks should be assessed. Risks fall into many categories like financial, safety, health, and travel. For each risk, a course of action should be prepared to counteract the adverse effect. Not all risks are easy to think of. If the school bus had to be pulled over by a cop for leaking oil on a cold night, what would be still keep the school on schedule for the conference the next day? Risk management can be a game of "What If" at times, but it is best to have a solution before the problem occurs.

Make a list of what risks your chapter can plan for.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

RESOURCES

There are many things to consider while traveling. We have compiled some resources to make it easier to travel to conferences and to travel at leisure.

Airlines

<https://transportation.gov/airconsumer/>
<https://www.boingo.com/> (Cheap Wi-Fi)
<http://ladybug.com/>
<https://www.routehappy.com/>
<http://seatexpert.com/>
<https://seatguru.com/>

Alternative Housing

<https://www.airbnb.com/>
<https://www.booking.com/>
<https://www.couchsurfing.com/dashboard>
<https://www.homeexchange.com/>
<https://www.homeforexchange.com/>
<https://www.hiusa.org/>

Buses

<http://boltbus.us/>
<https://flixbus.com/>
<https://greyhound.com/>
<https://us.megabus.com/>
<https://supershuttle.com/>

Car Services

<https://www.budget.com/en/home>
<https://www.e-zrentacar.com/>
<https://www.enterprise.com/en/home.html>
<https://www.lyft.com/>
<https://www.uber.com/>
<https://www.ztrip.com/>

Entertainment

<https://www.eventbrite.com/>
<https://www.opentable.com/>

<https://www.ticketmaster.com/>
<https://www.tripadvisor.com/>
<https://www.yelp.com/>

Gasoline

<https://gasbuddy.com/>
<http://missourigasprices.com/>
<http://stlouisgasprices.com/>

Multi-use Sites

<https://www.cheaptickets.com/>
<https://www.kayak.com/>
<https://www.kiwi.com/>
<https://www.priceline.com/>
<https://www.studentuniverse.com/>
<https://www.travelocity.com/>

Railways

<https://amtrak.com/>
<https://martaguide.com/> (Atlanta)
<https://www.transitchicago.com/>
<http://kcstreetcar.org/>

Scooters

<https://bird.co/>
<https://li.me/> (Lime)
<https://spin.app/>

Traffic

<http://inrix.com/mobile-apps/>
<https://modot.org/>
<https://www.waze.com/>



National Dress Code

FBLA-PBL members and advisers should develop an awareness of the image one's appearance projects. The purpose of the dress code is to uphold the professional image of the association and its members and to prepare students for the business world.

Appropriate professional attire is required in all conference areas for all attendees—advisers, members, and guests—at all general sessions, competitive events, exhibits, regional meetings, workshops, and other activities unless otherwise stated in the conference program.

Conference name badges are part of this dress code and must be worn for all conference functions. For safety reasons, do not wear name badges when touring.

Dress for Success



ACCEPTABLE

- Business suit with:
 - Blouse
 - Collared dress shirt and neck or bow tie
- Dress pants or skirt with:
 - Blouse
 - Collared dress shirt and neck or bow tie
- Business dress
- Blazer with dress pants and:
 - Blouse
 - Collared dress shirt and neck or bow tie
- Dress shoes/dress boots

UNACCEPTABLE

- Jewelry in visible body piercing, other than ears
- Denim or flannel clothing of any kind
- Shorts
- Athletic clothing
- Leggings or graphic designed hosiery/tights
- Skintight or revealing clothing, including tank tops, spaghetti straps, and mini/short skirts or dresses
- Swimwear
- Flip flops or casual sandals
- Athletic shoes
- Industrial work shoes
- Hiking boots
- Boat shoes
- Any canvas or fabric shoes
- Hats
- Clothing with printing that is suggestive, obscene, or promotes illegal substances

No dress code can cover all contingencies, so FBLA-PBL members must use a certain amount of judgment in their choice of clothing to wear. Members who experience uncertainty about unacceptable attire should ask their local or state adviser.