

Christine Pannier is a Program Technician from Washington/Ozaukee County. She also serves as WASCOE Vice President. Chris's willingness to participate in association activities has led to two leadership opportunities.

Convention Cash Club: Fort Wayne, In, August 4-7, 2021.

NASCOE offers a contest for those considering attending the National Convention for the first time. It is called the Convention Cash Club. When I saw the email come out in May I wasn't sure what a newbie like me could gain or contribute to a National Convention full of seasoned veterans. But I figured, why not; those that know me know I'm always up for a challenge. The winner from each area received a \$500 cash award.

Did it take a lot of work and time? Not at all. The requirements were to be an active NASCOE member, a first-time convention attendee, and submit an essay related to the theme of the convention.

This year's convention theme was "*Have a Ball in Indiana*" comparing NASCOE to a baseball team. I used the analogy of a shortstop. NASCOE is like a shortstop - always on the lookout, playing defense, ready to jump in on the fly and make a key play (by working with management to promote the mission of the Farm Service Agency and keep fair and equitable salaries, working conditions, and retirement consistent with other federal workers.) There were four winners from the five areas. I was chosen as the winner from the Midwest Area.

The cash club was paid when my attendance at the sessions was verified by getting a different participant signature for each session. I was asked to attend all convention general sessions and the awards banquet and give feedback on the sessions and on the convention as a whole.

It was that attendance and networking that really made me glad to be a participant in the Convention. I have been with the agency as a program technician for two years. The people I met and the information I gained is beyond explanation. The experience is worth it. I learned so much about NASCOE and what is has historically done for the county employee. I was asked what I thought about the convention, and I thought, "My brain is ready to explode, in a good way". Now I see why attendees have never missed a convention in 20 plus years and keep going after retirement. The sentiment heard many times is "NASCOE is my family."

Focused Leadership Development Program: Kansas City, KS October 28-30, 2021.

Focused Leadership Development Program training will be help in Kansas City on October 28-30. I read about the opportunity on the NASCOE website. I applied to take part with the recommendation of WASCOE president and was accepted to participate. There are approximately 50 participants nationwide and this program is directed at providing skills and knowledge to develop future state, area, and national leaders within NASCOE. Topics covered will range from NASCOE 101 to Political Action to Understanding your Personality and Interpersonal Skills to Roles within NASCOE. Both National and State have an interest in this program as costs are shared 50/50 between the two organizations. I hope to learn how to leverage the skills I have using opportunities [provided by NASCOE and WASCOE] to step out of my comfort zone and try something new or find a new way to do something.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Pannier
WASCOE Vice President