



MAKING THE CASE FOR A NATIONWIDE RETURN TO PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS



CDC Definition:

Large gatherings bring together many people from multiple households in a private or public space. Large gatherings are often planned events with a large number of guests and invitations. They sometimes involve lodging, event staff, security, tickets, and long-distance travel. [CDC's large events guidance](#) might apply to events such as conferences, trade shows, sporting events, festivals, concerts, or large weddings and parties.

FACT: Professional Meetings and Events (PME) are Not Just any Large Gathering

Unlike informal, large gatherings, PME's are able to be executed in a controlled environment by professional meeting planners who implement layers of proven health measures to ensure the safety of attendees and guests.

This level of control enables professional meetings and events of all sizes to be done safely—precipitating the need for updated public health guidance that recognizes this fact. By distinguishing PMEs from other types of large gatherings in public health guidance, state and local officials would be able to accelerate the resumption of large-scale, in-person PMEs across the country—instead of continuing the patchwork of broadly-defined, outdated rules that confuses business leaders and places a drag on attendance—even in places that are open.

As stated in a recent analysis by the Ohio State University (OSU), “a reevaluation of risk mitigation measures is warranted to ensure the public health response to the pandemic continues to be relevant to the conditions on the ground.”

[Click here](#) to read the Scientific Evidence for Conducting Safe and Healthy Professional Meetings and Events.

FACT: Professional Meetings and Events Implement Layers of Health Practices to Ensure the Safety of Attendees

According to the OSU analysis, PMEs have “the advantage of being structured and well-organized large gatherings where mitigation factors can be enforced to protect the health and safety of those in attendance.”

“PMEs in which safety precautions have been observed have not been super-spreader events, which are more associated with indoor social gatherings and public events and marked by a confluence of crowded indoor spaces together with a lack of proper mask use and physical distancing.”

The following evidence-based strategies are routinely implemented at PME to create a “layered effect” to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus:



Mask Wearing



Physical Distancing



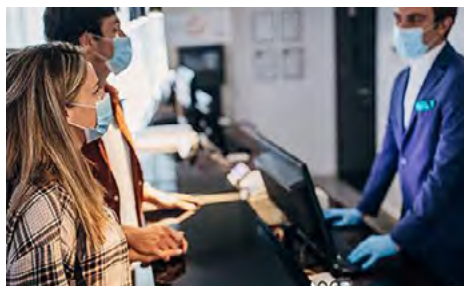
Disinfecting Surfaces



Proper Ventilation and Airflow



Individually Packaged Food and Beverage



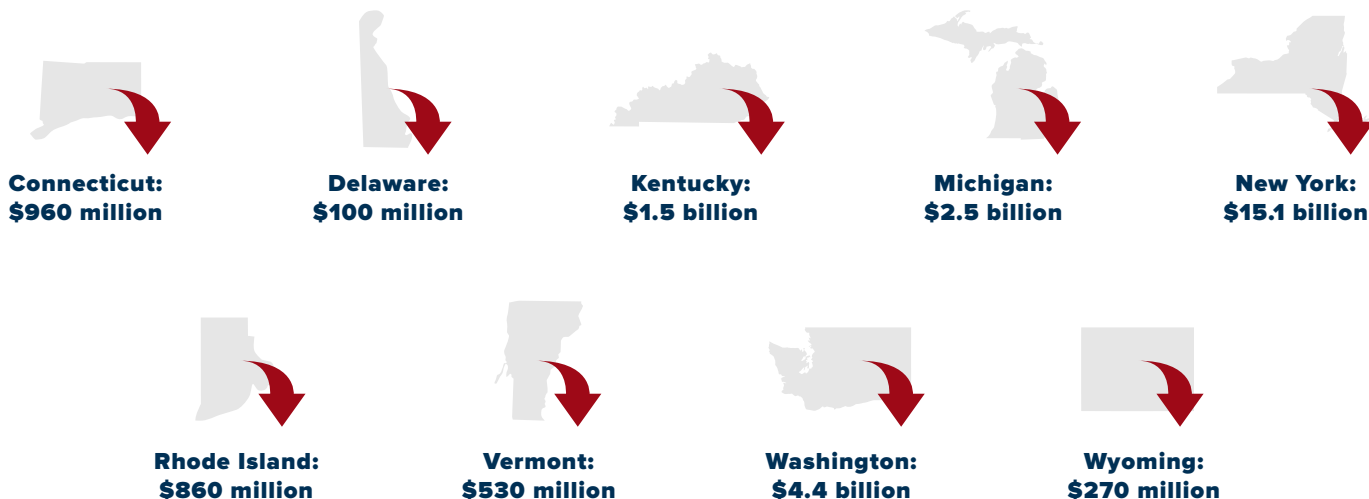
Health Screening

FACT: Professional Meetings and Events are Significant Economic Drivers

In-person PMEs are currently being held in the locations that are acknowledging these facts. States and cities that have yet to align their regulations with the current science are missing out and ultimately hurting their communities.

On average, COVID-19 restrictions cost states \$5.3 billion in 2020. In total, the U.S. saw a decline of \$211 billion last year in direct spending generated from business travel (of which \$97 billion was directly due to declines in meetings and events), leading to the loss of nearly 1.5 million direct jobs and almost \$30 billion in tax revenue.

In the following states, where restrictions remain, losses in business travel spending in 2020 alone amounted to:



To view the current patchwork of reopening across states, [click here](#).

FACT: By Adhering to Outdated Policies on Large Gatherings, Federal, State and Local Leaders are Needlessly Stalling Economic Recovery

Many businesses are unable to efficiently and effectively track the patchwork of different gathering restrictions in place at the state and local level. This creates confusion about when, where, and how to resume business travel—depressing attendance at PMEs, even in places that are open.

Further, more than half of meeting planners expect to resume face-to-face events in Q3 2021¹ and nearly two-thirds will resume by Q4 2021.¹ Three-quarters of meeting planners have RFPs in progress for future live events.² These planners are largely placing RFPs in states with clear rules around gathering limits.

Without clear and consistent information, event planners will have to put off planning critical details for future events in certain states, putting a drag on local economic recovery.

We're asking the CDC to update guidance on "large gatherings" to carve out professional meetings and events, using the framework of OSU's analysis, in order to create a baseline roadmap for their swift return.

For more information, visit LetsMeetThere.travel

1. I-Meet, June 2021

2. I-Meet, June 2021