

INSIDE BUZZ



The logo for SGMP Michigan features the acronym "SGMP" in a bold, black, sans-serif font above a stylized blue outline of the state of Michigan. The outline is partially filled with a lighter shade of blue, and a dark blue silhouette of the Michigan State Capitol building is positioned at the top right of the outline.

The membership newsletter of the
Michigan Society of Government Meeting Professionals (MiSGMP)

January/February 2026

President's Pen

Greetings!

I don't know about you, but I'm pretty sure my keyboard is still frozen from how cold it has been lately. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and that you're still sticking with your New Year's goals—professionally, personally, or at least surviving January in Michigan!



Your MiSGMP Board recently met for our mid-year retreat and had a very successful day of planning. We not only confirmed locations for all of our monthly meetings for 2026 and 2027, but we also finalized the AEC RFP, which suppliers should have already received. Our Annual Education Conference is coming up in March in Grand Rapids, and **registration is now open**. Sponsorship opportunities are also available, so please help us spread the word to your networks.

Our next monthly meeting is scheduled for February 18th at the Hyatt Place in Lansing. We hope to see many of you there for education, networking, and a much-needed winter meetup. If you haven't registered yet, [click here!](#)

Don't forget: award nominations are still open for our chapter. We've created a new system to nominate those who have gone above and beyond in supporting MiSGMP. If you missed it, [click here.](#)

On the national level, SGMP is rolling out new micro credentials. [Click here](#) to learn more if you're interested in freshening up your skills and investing in your personal and professional growth.

We're also about five months away from the National Education Conference in Virginia. Now is the time to start thinking about joining your board members at NEC and making plans to attend.

Speaking of the board, we will be opening nominations soon for MiSGMP Board of Directors positions for the next term (July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028). This is a great opportunity to get involved, help shape the future of our chapter, and bring your ideas and energy to the table.

As always, if you have any questions or just want to chat about anything related to MiSGMP, events, or our profession, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any of your board members.

Stay warm, and I look forward to seeing all of you in February!

P.S: Don't forget to follow us on **Facebook** to get quick updates about the chapter.

Warm wishes,

Nick Stratton

Event Specialist

Kelley Cawthorne

(C) 269.425.2495

And President of the Michigan Chapter of Society Government Meeting Professionals



ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE



Registration for AEC 2026

Don't miss your chance to join us for an **out-of-this-world experience** at AEC 2026! We're gearing up for a cosmic adventure filled with stellar education, hands-on learning, and networking opportunities that are truly light-years ahead. [Register today.](#)

March 11–13, 2026

[Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel](#)

Registration Fees: \$125 Planner & \$225 Supplier

 [Register Now!](#)

Room Rate: \$98

[Reserve online](#) or call **616.957.1770** and mention **MiSGMP**

Reservation Deadline: February 27, 2026



AEC Award Nominations

MiSGMP recognizes its members through awards that are presented annually at the Annual Education Conference. These awards are given to members who have made



outstanding contributions to the chapter's goals and the society's mission. Their work shines a spotlight on exceptional achievements and motivates continued excellence.

Nomination forms for this years awards are OPEN until Friday, February 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Review the criteria and nomination requirements and begin thinking of those deserving members. **COMPLETE THE NOMINATION FORM BY CLICKING THIS LINK.**

AEC Silent Auction



If you have an item or service you would like to donate to our **AEC Silent Auction**, please let us know! Your contributions help support our chapter's programming and scholarship funds. To submit your donation details, simply [click on the DONATION FORM LINK](#).

Supplier Member Spotlight



Haleigh Gerwig | Convention Sales Manager| Experience Grand Rapids

Tell us a little more about yourself:

My background is in advertising sales; I worked for a publishing company with two group travel publications and loved the industry and the people involved. I'm so thrilled to now be on the CVB side of things representing the amazing city of Grand Rapids!

Tell us a little bit about the region you represent:

Grand Rapids, Michigan is crafted for meetings with over 10,000 hotel rooms, 120+ meeting venues, including a state-of-the-art 240,000 sq. ft. Convention Center, and a safe, compact, walkable downtown. The city is easily accessible from anywhere in Michigan.

How did you get connected to SGMP and the Michigan Chapter, and what do you like most about your membership?

When I started in my role with Experience Grand Rapids, I inherited the membership to SGMP's Michigan Chapter and have found that this membership provides valuable networking opportunities, as well as an incredibly fun and welcoming group.

What are your thoughts regarding the industry moving forward and how does SGMP play a role?

There is truly nothing like in-person connection and SGMP's monthly meetings are a great way to make those connections and continue to develop them over time.

What meeting trends are you seeing that may benefit other chapter members?

Offsite events that give visitors an authentic and unique-to-the-area experience are incredibly valuable and create a lasting impact. It's a great opportunity to create an experience that cannot be replicated elsewhere and share what sets your area apart from the rest.

If you've never been spotlighted and are interested, please complete the MiSGMP [new Member and Member Spotlight Form](#)

Planner Member Spotlight



Nick Hussein| Professor | Central Michigan University

Tell us a little more about yourself:

I earned my undergraduate degree from Northwood University and my master's degree from Central Michigan University. I spent over 30 years in the hospitality industry, including 12 years in professional sales, and wrapped up my hospitality career as the Director of Sales and Marketing for a Marriott property.

Along the way, I was honored to receive the Michigan Society of Association Executives Supplier Diamond Award (2013) and the MiSGMP Supplier of the Year Award (2012). I was also named Faculty Advisor of the Year for Pi Sigma Epsilon in both 2022 and 2025.

I currently serve as a Hospitality & Professional Sales Instructor at Central Michigan University, the Internship Director for Hospitality Service Administration, and the Director of Corporate Relations for the Sales Program. Known for my practical teaching style and real-world approach, I've had the privilege of training countless sales professionals, hotel teams, and front-line associates to elevate their performance and close more business.

How did you get connected to SGMP and the Michigan Chapter, and what do you like most about your membership?

I was actively involved during my professional sales career and have always had a special place in my heart for MiSGMP. I am excited to be able to rejoin as an educator.

What are your thoughts regarding the industry moving forward and how does SGMP play a role?

Our industry has had some challenges and during the pandemic we hit road blocks. I see our industry bouncing back and really embracing the meetings and events industry. The hospitality industry will continue to grow and have a huge economic impact on our society.

What meeting trends are you seeing that may benefit other chapter members?

To be fair, I have been out of the meetings industry for a few years and looking forward to learning from others what the trends are looking like.

If you've never been spotlighted and are interested, please complete the MiSGMP [new Member and Member Spotlight Form](#)

Membership Report

MiSGMP MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

MiSGMP MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As of December 31, 2025

159

TOTAL MEMBERS

 74
Planners

 78
Suppliers

 7
Others

Planner / Supplier Ratio: 48.7% / 51.3%



GOAL MET! 150+ MEMBERS Membership Goal Exceeded!

UPDATE YOUR PROFILE



- ✓ Update Contact Info
- ✓ Review Profile Details
- ✓ Check Expiration Date

MEMBER VALUE



Education



Resources



Networking

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



- Be Featured in our Newsletter!
- Submit the Member Spotlight Form!

Stronger Together • Growing Membership • Engaged Community



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

New Members:

- **Jordan Jakeway**, American Hospitality Management
- **Aimee Zionskowski**, Traverse City Tourism
- **AnnMarie Moore**, Michigan Association of Non-public Schools
- **Nikki Lunkenheimer**, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- **Nick Anderson**, Destination Ann Arbor
- **Brittany Whitford**, State of Michigan/ MiLEAP/ Office of Sixty by 30
- **Emma Raymond**, Courtyard Mt Pleasant at Central Michigan University

Glad to have you in the MiSGMP community!

MiSGMP Apparel Order

What better way to show your support and participation with **MiSGMP** than to wear brand new branded apparel! Look through our catalog, pick out your favorite shirt, and email your choice to mary@targetwithus.com. You will be invoiced once your shirt has been delivered!

[SHOP NOW](#)

DEADLINE TO ORDER IS FEBRUARY 12TH

III Education

Upcoming MiSGMP Education Meetings



Mental Health in the Workplace

February 18, 2026

Speaker: Sean Egan

Competency: Personal & Professional Development

Registration is open for this month's education session. Sean Egan, Deputy Director of Labor, Michigan LEO will explain how investing in mental health and safety is critical to build strong workplaces, a strong workforce, and strong communities. Employers who invest in their employees' mental health and safety see a significant return on investment including improved employee satisfaction, increased productivity, and reduced absenteeism and turnover. [Learn more & register here](#)

Hyatt Place Lansing

2401 Showtime Dr.

[Click here](#) to book an overnight room at the government rate of \$98.00 ++

National Education Conference

The 2026 National Education Conference (NEC) is June 9-11, 2026 in Williamsburg, VA. The deadline to [apply for a national scholarship](#) from MiSGMP is Friday, February 13, 2026.

Certified Government Meeting Professional (CGMP)



YOU ARE A GOVERNMENT MEETINGS EXPERT

BUILD EXPERTISE

GROW YOUR NETWORK

BECOME A LEADER



YOU are a government meetings expert, and holding your Certified Government Meeting Professional (CGMP) designation is the proof. Don't forget to renew your CGMP every three years. Renewing is as easy as 1-2-3. Here's how:

Step 1 = Earning Credits.

- **Earn hours at SGMP National Events - [National Education Conference \(NEC\)](#)**
- **Earn hours at SGMP Chapter Events - View our chapter listing [here](#).**
- **Earn hours online - View our online learning portal [here](#).**

Step 2 = Track Your Hours. Login at <https://learn.sgmp.org> with your regular SGMP login credentials. Add outside education sessions or track the ones that you've already taken through national, another chapter, or MiSGMP.

Step 3 = Apply for recertification.

If you have any questions about the recertification process or requirements, please contact SGMP Education Director, Alan Kleinfeld, at education@sgmp.org.



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