

Request for Proposals

Event Planning Services

Washington State Academy of Sciences

Annual Celebration & Member Induction Ceremony — October 8, 2026

Issued by:	Washington State Academy of Sciences (WSAS)
Event Date:	October 8, 2026
Location:	Seattle, WA
Expected Attendance:	~250 guests (100 for early breakout sessions)
Questions Due:	Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Proposals Due:	Friday, April 17, 2026 by 11:59 pm
Submit To:	joe.conry@washacad.org — Subject: "Event Planner RFP-[LASTNAME]"
Contract Start (Target):	May 6, 2026

About WSAS

The Washington State Academy of Sciences (WSAS) is a non-profit organization that advances the use of science and engineering to benefit the people of Washington. WSAS's annual celebration and new member induction is a signature event that brings together WSAS members with leaders from business, government, and research institutions, as well as high school students participating in the WA Junior Academy of Sciences. The event honors newly inducted members, celebrates science in Washington, and features provocative presentations and conversations with thought-leaders. It is funded through ticket sales and sponsorships.

Event Overview

WSAS is seeking a skilled event planner to take the lead in coordinating and executing the 2026 Annual Celebration and New Member Induction Ceremony. The event will be in Seattle on October 8, 2026. WSAS has two potential venue options on hold. The selected planner will review and refine our venue needs to help finalize a contract and will then assume the role of primary point of contact with the venue.

Event Schedule

The following schedule is anticipated but remains subject to refinement in collaboration with the WSAS board, staff, and selected planner:

Time	Activity	Est. Attendees
3:00 – 4:30 pm	Roundtable Discussions (breakout rooms)	~100

4:30 – 5:15 pm	Student poster session; remaining guests arrive	~200
5:15 – 6:30 pm	VIP thought leaders panel & induction ceremony	~200
6:30 – 8:30 pm	Dinner and networking	~250

Thematic Focus: Grown in Washington

In 2026, one of WSAS’s major projects explored innovation opportunities in the agriculture sector. The event menu and some associated educational elements will celebrate this work by featuring Washington-grown ingredients in coordination with the caterer and relevant food commissions. This may include video content, posters, and FAQs developed in partnership with those commissions.

Scope of Services

The selected event planner will be responsible for the following:

Project and Budget Management

Create a project plan in consultation with the WSAS Executive Director, staff, and venue lead and manage implementation to meet deadlines. Coordinate check-in meetings at least biweekly and seek input as needed to drive decision making and align actions. Track costs, ensure products and services paid for are received and satisfactory, and receipts/invoices are logged.

Event Design

Partner with WSAS staff and other identified stakeholders to develop an agenda, floor plan/space layout, and décor. Develop a flow-of-show document for WSAS and key collaborators.

Venue Management

Serve as the primary liaison with venue for all logistics, including room setup, audio-visual needs, timeline coordination, and load-in/load-out procedures. Note that the caterer is provided through the venue and is already selected; the planner will coordinate with the existing caterer rather than source one independently. Audio-visual services are part of the venue contract and will be managed through this relationship. Review and approve venue and AV invoices for accuracy prior to payment.

Food & Catering Coordination

Coordinate with the venue’s caterer and WSAS staff on menu development, food layout, and service plan. The caterer is pre-selected as part of the venue arrangement. Work with the caterer to incorporate Washington-grown ingredients and educational materials aligned with the agriculture theme.

Ticketing System Management

Manage the ticketing and registration process using WSAS-provided software. Responsibilities include:

- Setting up and maintaining the registration platform
- Tracking ticket sales and providing regular status updates to WSAS staff
- Managing attendee inquiries and wait-list coordination if applicable
- Generating attendee reports

Advertising & Participant Communications

Develop and implement an advertising strategy to attract sponsors and drive ticket sales. Create promotional materials and coordinate ticket sales through WSAS's existing channels (primarily email, partner networks, and social media.) Ensure all participants receive timely information for a smooth, enjoyable experience.

Sponsorship Coordination

Work with the WSAS director to ensure sponsors receive appropriate recognition in all event materials and at the event itself.

Hotel Accommodations

Identify, negotiate, and manage a hotel room block for out-of-town guests. Communicate reservation details and deadlines to attendees.

Supply and Services Management

Assess event needs and recommend supplies for procurement, including décor, printed materials, signage, specialty items, and a photographer. WSAS will cover the costs of approved materials, printing, and services.

Day-of Coordination and Volunteer Management

The planner will serve as the lead for all set-up, event execution, and clean-up. Define roles and responsibilities for event-day volunteers and staff. WSAS anticipates approximately 6 volunteers (recruited by WSAS) and 4 staff members supporting setup, registration, event operations, and stakeholder management. The selected planner should provide clear role descriptions and instructions in advance and provide on-site supervision and coordination throughout the event.

Post-Event Wrap-Up

Coordinate with WSAS staff to ensure smooth completion of all follow-up activities, including:

- Participant and sponsor thank-you communications
- Vendor payment processing and final invoice reconciliation
- Event debrief and documentation of lessons learned for future planning

Budget

The event planner's role is to help WSAS execute the event within a defined overall event budget; all vendor and event costs will be paid directly by WSAS. Proposals should therefore address planner fees only (not total event costs).

Based on comparable full-service non-profit events of this scale in the Seattle area, we anticipate planner fees in the range of \$6,000–\$10,000. We welcome proposals within or outside this range if accompanied by a clear justification. Please break out your proposed fee by phase (e.g., pre-event planning, day-of coordination, post-event wrap-up), as this helps WSAS understand how time and effort are allocated across the engagement.

Please note the following additional parameters:

- WSAS will cover costs for approved materials, printing, and event supplies directly.
- WSAS will provide the ticketing and registration platform; the vendor is expected to use WSAS-designated software.
- Out-of-town travel expenses for the vendor are not reimbursable.

If you have preliminary questions about budget parameters, you are welcome to raise them during the Q&A period (see Section 6).

Qualifications

We are seeking a planner based in the Puget Sound area who demonstrates:

- Proven experience planning events or galas for non-profit organizations (references required)
- Strong vendor relationship management and negotiation skills
- Experience managing event budgets
- Excellent organizational and communication skills
- The ability to work independently while keeping WSAS staff and stakeholders appropriately engaged
- Familiarity with the Seattle/Puget Sound vendor landscape (preferred)

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be submitted as a single PDF or Word document and must include the following:

- Firm or planner overview and relevant experience with comparable events
- At least two professional references from similar non-profit event engagements
- Proposed approach to each area of scope described in Section 3
- Proposed project timeline from contract signing through post-event wrap-up
- Itemized fee structure and cost breakdown for element of SOW listed above
- Any proposed sub-contractors or vendor partners

Submission Instructions & Timeline

Questions Due:	Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Q&A Addendum Posted:	Friday, April 10, 2026
Proposals Due:	Friday, April 17, 2026 by 11:59 pm
Finalists Notified:	Thursday, April 23, 2026
Interviews:	Week of April 30, 2026
Target Contract Start:	May 6, 2026

Submit proposals to:

joe.conry@washacad.org

Subject line: Event Planner RFP-[YOUR LAST NAME]

Questions and requests for clarification must be submitted by April 7th. Answers to all questions will be shared with all prospective proposers via an addendum posted by April 10th.

Addendum (4/8/26):

No additional questions were received by the deadline on April 7, 2026. Additional questions may be addressed in finalist interviews.