

Iran Cultural and Educational Center



Nowruz Program Guidelines and Committee Structure

**Version 3.0
October 2011**

I. Nowruz Committee Mission

The mission of the Nowruz committee shall always follow the Iran Cultural and Educational Center (ICEC) mission, which is “to create a nurturing environment that strengthens the sense of connection, pride and appreciation of Iranian culture, heritage and history”. The Nowruz committee will organize and assist the ICEC students in presenting their cultural programs promoting Nowruz, our New Year celebration.

II. Policy and Procedures

1. The committee shall appoint a Chair at the general meeting of the Community and School Association (CSA).
2. The Chair must have served as a Co-chair or a sub-committee manager for at least two years.
3. The Chair will elect one or two Co-chairs.
4. Any suggested changes or updates to this document should be given to the Chair, who will then organize the comments and submit them to ICEC Board for review and approval.
5. All revised versions of this document must be signed by the parties listed in section X.
6. All provisions in this document shall be strictly followed and enforced by the committee and its members.
7. This committee is an integral part of the ICEC school system and is not an independent entity. Therefore all the committee activities, finances, budget and decisions are subject to review and approval by the ICEC Board.
8. A representative from ICEC Board will be assigned to be present at all key committee meetings.

III. Nowruz Program Objectives

A. Program Purpose and Content

1. The entire program shall be BY and FOR ICEC present and past students, their family and friends. No adults shall be involved in the actual performance on stage. Presentations and speeches of the ICEC president, officers, staff and CSA president are exceptions.
2. ICEC Nowruz program is for our students, family and friends and shall not be compared to other Persian Nowruz celebration events, which are designed for the general public.
3. Maximum participation of ICEC students, teacher assistants and previous students should be encouraged and supported by the committee.
4. The programs shall be related to Nowruz and generally shall promote happiness and joy of this special celebration.
5. No program of any political or religious nature is allowed.
6. The content of all proposed programs, including the class programs and student group programs, shall be reviewed and is subject to approval of the program committee and ICEC officers and /or their designees.

B. Performers and performances

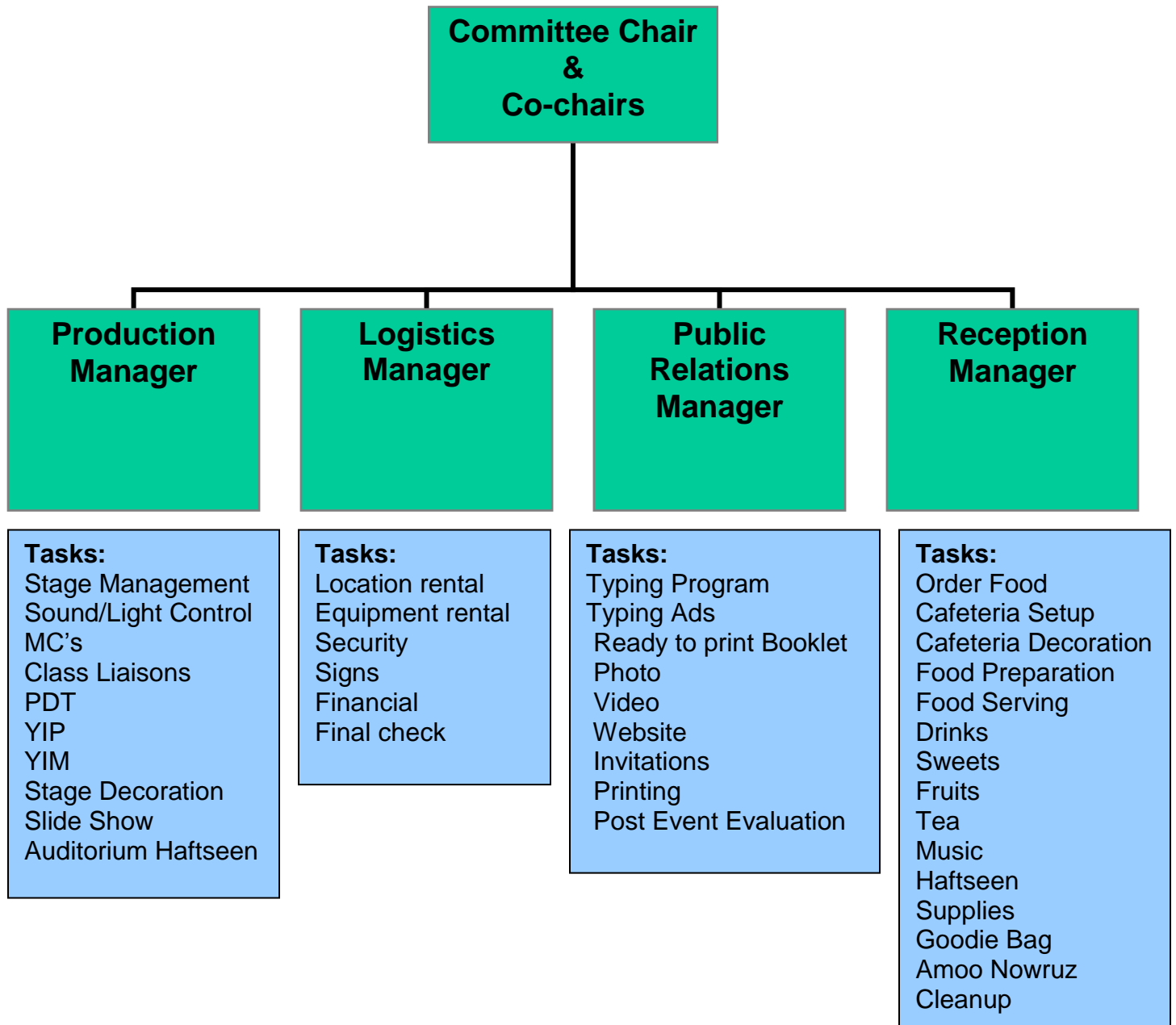
1. The Nowruz program is not a “talent show” and not intended to be performed by an individual or very small groups of students.
2. The ICEC class programs and student group programs shall be given first priority since they are designed to promote maximum participation by the ICEC students.
3. The Nowruz Committee shall give full support to the ICEC student groups, such as Persian Dance Group (PDT), Young Iranian Musicians (YIM) and Young Iranian Performers (YIP) and assist them in practicing and performing on stage.
4. The overall quality of the program depends on program content as well as the degree of practice and readiness. All teachers, teacher assistants, PDT, YIM, YIP group leaders are strongly encouraged to have their program contents reviewed and approved no later than late November to allow start of practicing in early December.
5. Every attempt will be made to make the entire length of performances, including announcements I not to exceed 120 minutes total.

6. Stage practices during the day of the program shall be organized and controlled by the production manager, giving priority to those classes and groups such as YIP, YIM and PDT who have more complex programs and require audio / visual checks. Not all classes need or will have a chance to practice on stage.

C. Committee Activities

1. Activities of the Nowruz committee are generally divided into four categories:
 - A) Program
 - B) Logistics
 - C) Public Relations
 - D) Reception
2. Many of the activities and tasks within these categories require close coordination and by the nature of such programs responsibilities may overlap.
3. The participation of the maximum number of parents should be encouraged at ICEC PTA meetings.
4. Participation of new parents should also be encouraged. Due to complexity and knowledge of details required for committee directors and managers, it is preferred that persons nominating themselves for these positions should have been involved in the particular committee at least two years.
5. All chairs, co-chairs, managers and members of the Nowruz committee are strictly volunteers and shall not be compensated by any direct or indirect methods.

IV. Committee Organization



V. Chair & Co-chairs Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Chair and Co-chairs include overview and coordination of other four main activities: Production, Logistics, Public Relations and Reception. Chair or Co-chairs will coordinate all communication and meetings of the Nowruz committee. The committee Chairs and Co-chairs will also be the main communicators with ICEC, CSA, class liaisons and essentially organize and control the entire program in auditorium and on stage on the day of event.

A) Meetings and Correspondences

The program chair or co-chairs will be responsible for scheduling, informing and conducting the Nowruz committee meetings and sending correspondences to the volunteers. The first committee meeting should be conducted in early November. Monthly meetings for November and December, then Bi-weekly meeting in January and February and eventually weekly meetings in March are highly recommended.

B) Overall Coordinator

Chair and Co-chairs are also responsible for communication with other activity managers, keeping the committee members informed of the progress. Additionally, they are the primary contact with CSA and ICEC staff.

C) Class Liaisons

One person will be designated as the class liaison coordinator who will coordinate and communicate with each class parent liaison and provide report of progress and class needs to the committee. They are responsible to help copy tapes/CDs, contact parents about practice times, costumes, rehearsal times, and discuss any special needs with the committee. Class liaison coordinator will provide a verbal report of the progress and status at the committee meetings.

VI. Production Manager

This position is one of the most complex and requires extensive experience with stage setup, audio, visual, lights and controls. It is preferred that production manager has a minimum of two years experience as stage assistants.

A) Program Coordination

He/She will start communicating with class liaisons and attend class rehearsals and try to accommodate the needs of each class or group. He/she will have meetings with PDT, YIM and YIP and discuss their special needs. A list of audio needs will be given to the logistics manager before equipment rental, based on experience of previous years. He/she will also directly be involved and coordinate the actual sequence and timing of performances with the committee chair. Stage manager will be responsible for managing the stage crew and logistics of stage settings.

B) Sound/Light Control

This person also needs to have a minimum of two years experience being involved in coordination of stage and performances for the Nowruz program. He/she will visit the location with the logistics manager to determine type of equipment rental. He/she will directly communicate with the stage manager and be responsible for audio/video/lights control during performances.

C) Masters of Ceremonies (MCs)

All MCs should be chosen from students in higher grades and/or previous school graduates. One MC coordinator with an assistant will start in December organizing and coordinating with higher grade teachers in selecting the MCs, preparing written text for each MC and conducting a minimum of four practice sessions to ensure they read the material well. The order of MCs will be decided in late February after the chair and stage manager decide on the order of the program. The MCs will be given seats in the front row, next to the chair, which will allow the control of on/off stage happenings. A final copy of the written document shall be given to chair.

D) Persian Dance Troop (PDT)

PDT will be given a maximum of 20 minutes for their combined performances. PDT will make their own arrangements for finding performers, conducting interviews, contacting parents and setting up their rules, practice place and times. It is recommended the practices to start no later than early November. Parents of performers are responsible for all costume costs. ICEC and CSA will pay for the practice location rental costs.

The group coordinator will either attend or give a prior report to the Nowruz committee chair, which includes status, progress, details of performances, timing and any special needs. The group should also give well-marked and separate CDs of the music and go over details with the audio/light control manager at least two weeks prior to the program date. On the day of the program, the group leader, with help from the parents in his/her group, are responsible for collecting all costumes, clothing and decorations.

E) Young Iranian Musicians (YIM)

YIM will be given a maximum of 20 minutes for their combined performances. YIM will make their own arrangements for finding performers, conducting interviews, contacting parents and setting up their rules, practice place and times. It is recommended the practices start no later than early November.

Costs should be paid by the performer parents, however, minor costs should be taken from the fees collected. ICEC and CSA will pay for the practice location rental costs. The group coordinator will either attend or give a prior report to the Nowruz committee chair, which includes status, progress, details of their performances, timing and any special needs. The group will go over details with the audio/light control manager and stage manager, at least two weeks prior to the program date.

F) Young Iranian Performers (YIP)

YIP will be given a maximum of 20 minutes for their combined performances. YIP will make their own arrangements for finding performers, conducting interviews, contacting parents and setting up their rules, practice place and times. It is recommended the practices start no later than early November. Any costume cost should be paid for by the performer parents. Minor costs should be taken from the fees collected. ICEC and CSA will pay for the practice location rental costs. The group coordinator will either attend or give a prior report to the Nowruz committee chair, which includes status, progress, details of their performances, timing and any special needs. The group should also go over details of stage set up, decorations and special needs with the audio/light control manager and stage

manager, at least two weeks prior to the program date. On the day of the program, the group leaders with help from the parents in his/her group are responsible for collecting all costumes, clothing and decorations. ICEC decorations should be boxed and taken to storage.

G) Stage Decoration

A stage decoration coordinator will organize a group who will go over needs and inventory the material in storage, pick up the material a day before the program, arrive as soon as the auditorium opens (usually 9:30 AM on the program date, check contract with school), and start setting up decorations. The same group is responsible for taking down all decorations, boxing them and taking them to storage.

H) Stage Crew

The production manager should try to use parents and past ICEC students as the stage crew.

I) Slide Show Coordinator

A slide show with two parts is recommended to be presented at opening and before the performance begins. Part 1 will be public education about Iran and Nowruz and part 2, pictures from updated previous years ICEC activities. The slide show and equipment will be set up and taken down by the slide show coordinator. Preparing and projecting slides for certain classes is also the responsibility of this volunteer.

J) Auditorium Haftseen

A volunteer will set up a small special Haftseen at the main entrance to the auditorium. She/he will be responsible for preparation, setup and taking down of the Haftseen.

VII. Logistics Manager Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the logistics manager includes rental of the event location, rental of sound and light equipment, coordination and supervision of event safety, security and signs, financial summary, and final cleanup check of both auditorium and cafeteria.

A) Location rental

Logistics manager will work with ICEC officers and Nowruz Committee chair to find a place for the event. The process starts very early in the year. Typically the application must be submitted between July 15 and August 1. After candidate places are chosen, this person will work with Interagency Coordination Board for Community use of Public facilities (ICB) in Montgomery County to rent the place, and if needed, organize visits to the location by program chair, stage manager and sound/light coordinator. She/he will be the primary contact person between Nowruz committee, ICB, the school's business manager and Media System Technician (MST).

B) Sound/Light Equipment Rental

The sound system and lighting is a critical part of the program. The Logistics manager, with help from the Nowruz committee and ICEC officers, will determine the needs for lighting and sound system. He/she will find and rent needed equipment if the school's equipments are insufficient.

C) Security

There will be probably two security officers as part of place rental from ICB. They are supposed to walk the hallways and make sure everything is in order. However we will have our own security volunteers by the CSA security committee who will also assist with the Nowruz events. Our volunteers will be in charge of auditorium doors and will make sure that kids do not leave auditorium during the event, they are safe and orderly in the hallways and direct guests to the cafeteria for dinner. The CSA security committee will find and organize this task and report directly to the logistics director.

D) Signs

Various signs are needed for both inside and outside the school. The outside signs will direct arriving guests to the parking lot and the auditorium. The interior signs will show the direction from the auditorium to cafeteria, show lines for food

and tea stations (entrance, exit) and also will show food choices. The signs need to be both in Farsi and English. In addition to signs, we need to tape some of the areas in the auditorium such as balconies and extra seats to prevent kids from entering there. These locations will be determined during rehearsal by the program chair.

E) Financial

CSA finance director or his/her designee will be in charge of all the expenses, sales, donations and income of the Nowruz program. The Nowruz financial manager will keep all receipts and provide summaries for the committee as well as CSA. Ticket price shall be recommended by this person based on previous year's experience as well as this year's food and rental costs. Reasonable expenses required by various volunteer subcommittees such as decorations, performer's costumes, etc. should also be budgeted for and paid by financial manager.

F) Final Check

Logistics manager and his/her designee will do a final check of the cleanliness of all areas including hallways, auditorium and cafeteria and make sure all supplies and signs are removed. She/he will also review the checklist with the school staff before leaving.

VIII. Public Relations Manager Responsibilities

Public Relations manager is in charge of publication, announcements, website notifications, parent / school communications as well as donations, advertisement and printing the final program booklet. She/he will be in close contact with the chair, CSA and ICEC staff and have them review, comment and approve all publications. The person must have assisted on this committee for at least three years and be able to do light typing in English and Farsi. He/she will also coordinate and supervise the following tasks. He/she will give reports of progress at the committee meetings.

A) Announcement

This person will prepare the Nowruz announcements based on guidelines from previous years and have them reviewed by ICEC officers. After their approval she/he will type it in Farsi and English and make it available for printing and distribution in class and publication on ICEC website, four weeks prior to program date.

B) Program

This person will prepare the Nowruz program and information for the booklet both in Farsi and English. The final version should be ready for printing at least two weeks prior to the event.

C) Advertising Solicitation

These volunteers will contact different Iranian organizations and businesses and ask them to participate in the Nowruz activity by placing their business card or company's advertisement in the booklet. This list of participants should be kept with their contact information, advertisement and the fees in a print ready version for the public relations manager. After the event, a thank you note signed by ICEC president, CSA president and Nowruz Committee chair shall be sent to those supporting the program.

D) Photography

Two volunteers will take pictures during the events from all the programs including all activities prior to as well as performance and reception and give them on a CD to the public relations manager. A copy will be given to the slide show coordinator.

E) Video

Two Volunteers will capture the program on a video and edit and compile the videos for a DVD production, give the original to the public relations manager who will make arrangements for reproduction and sales to the families.

F) Website

Volunteers are needed to prepare the announcement for the website and also to prepare the pictures for posting on ICEC website.

G) Invitations

Two volunteers are needed to keep track of the invitation cards and provide them to the families. The cards should be ready about 3-4 weeks before the event.

H) Printing

This person will be responsible for the printing of all the invitations, and the booklet. Invitations must be ready 3-4 weeks before the event and the booklet must be ready one day before the event.

I) Post event

This is for evaluation of the entire program and the event. We need to prepare a questionnaire and provide it to the families and compile all the results to the Nowruz committee for future consideration. Suggestions from all subcommittees are also encouraged.

J) Improvements

Suggestions for improvements shall be summarized by the public relations manager and given to next year's chair for implementation.

IX. Reception Manager Responsibilities

The reception manager's responsibility is overseeing all volunteers in tasks related to ordering and serving the food, sweets, drinks, tea and cafeteria set up, decorations and cleanup. A separate sub-committee will be formed in December to discuss, coordinate and find volunteers for the following tasks:

A) Food Ordering

In compliance with the Montgomery School system policies, all food must be prepared at facilities with food preparation license.

The menu, variety and amount of food to be ordered should be based on the anticipated number of guests which includes previous year's experience. Price proposals should be obtained, negotiated and discussed with Nowruz committee and ICEC officers.

B) Cafeteria setup

Reception manager or her/his designee should visit the school by coordinating with the logistics manager and decide on the number of serving lines, table /chair set up and locations for Haftseen, tea stations, sweets, etc.

C) Decorations

Volunteers will evaluate supplies from last year and order and set up decorations in the cafeteria. They are responsible for taking down all decorations, boxing them and taking them to storage.

D) Food Serving

The food needs to be organized and served in an efficient and sanitary method. The goal should be to serve our guests as quick as possible with a variety available for everyone. Review previous year's quantity and adjust based on anticipated number of guests.

E) Drinks

Only non-alcoholic drinks, preferably water and juices should be served. The goal should be sufficient and not wasteful. Review previous year's quantity and adjust based on anticipated number of guests.

F) Sweets

Recommend usual Nowruz Persian pastries are to be served. The goal should be sufficient and not wasteful. Review previous year's quantity and adjust based on anticipated number of guests. A volunteer should be selected to pick up and deliver the sweets to the event place.

G) Fruit

Limited fruits of appropriate size and type should be ordered. Review previous year's quantity and adjust based on anticipated number of guests.

H) Tea

Two volunteers will coordinate getting large tea pots, extension cords, sugar cubes, setting up two tea stations, and purchasing tea and at locations decided by the cafeteria set up coordinator. The volunteers will be in charge of refilling and making tea during the entire reception, then taking down the stations, and cleaning their areas and returning the tea pots.

I) Music

One person with "DJ" experience will be responsible to prepare CDs appropriate for the dinner and dance. He/she will learn the details of the ICEC sound system and be in charge of music during the reception. Any additional announcements should only be made by ICEC officers or CSA president.

J) Haftseen

One person will be responsible to bring, decorate and set up a Haftseen table in the cafeteria at a location decided by the reception manager. She/he is also in charge of taking down the haft seen table and decorations.

K) Supplies

One person is responsible to take lists of supplies from the reception manager, purchase and deliver all needed supplies, such as table cloths, paper plates, napkins, cups, spoons, forks, etc. All extras will be boxed and taken to storage by this same person. Payment will be made by the CSA finance director.

L) Goodie Bag

If decided by the reception committee, appropriate goodie bags with useful but not messy prizes will be prepared by these volunteers to give to Amoo Nowruz for distribution among kids during reception.

M) Amoo Nowruz

A person will dress to represent Amoo Nowruz and organize kids to enter cafeteria with special touches remembering Amoo Nowruz. Due to the number of people in a confined room and level of noise, special speeches or theatrical type setting would not be practical and is strongly discouraged. Traditional Hadji Firouz with black painted face is not permitted.

N) Cleanup

This is by far the most labor-intensive task requiring as many volunteers as possible. Although we pay for cleanup as a part of our rental agreement, we should at a minimum, remove all decorations, settings, supplies, foods, and drinks out of the reception area, hallways and cafeteria. In addition by helping MC staff with cleanup we want to make sure we get a good report, so we can utilize the preferred locations for many more years.

The cleanup crew should not remove any decorations. They will be removed and packaged by the decorations crew.

The logistics manager or his/her designee will do a final walk through and prepare the check list and get confirmation from the school staff prior to leaving for the evening. It is encouraged to take pictures/video before and after.