

Client Connections 2020: What You Need to Know

What is Client Connections?

Client Connections is a lottery-based event on the second day of the annual ASJA Conference, and at ASJA regional conferences. Professional members can register in advance to participate in brief face-to-face meetings with industry representatives who want to meet freelance writers. They include literary agents, media editors, and representatives from marketing, advertising, and PR agencies who seek content for corporate brands. This speed-dating event gives ASJA professional members an exclusive opportunity to make new connections with people who value the work professional writers do. You may find your next best client—or an agent seeking his next best client may find YOU. Hence, Client Connections.

When is the next Client Connections?

Monday, April 20 from 2:00-5:00 pm at ASJA's Annual Conference in New York.

How long are the meetings?

Meetings last NINE minutes. Time limits are strictly enforced. You must conclude your meeting and leave the table when instructed to do so.

Who can participate in Client Connections?

All ASJA professional members who are currently in good standing and who have registered to attend the second day of the New York conference on April 20 can participate in the Client Connections lottery. Important: no one will be permitted to participate in Client Connections if they have not paid their conference registration fee by the lottery signup deadline.

Whom might I be able to meet with?

You can see the list of registered editors and agents on the Client Connections section of the website.

****PLEASE DO NOT PITCH THESE EDITORS/AGENTS PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE!** If our members inundate our guests via email, they will no longer feel the need to participate in our in-person events.

****What happens during a Client Connections meeting?**

This varies depending on the specific participants. Some agents/editors simply want to learn a little bit about you, your background and your areas of expertise. Some are seeking writers with platform and a following. Others want to hear specific pitches and ideas, and of course you might want to present a book idea to a literary agent. To be safe, we suggest you prepare an "elevator speech" about yourself and be prepared to suggest a few ideas relevant to the person you're meeting. Be prepared to give a very concise pitch or overview of your book or project, your unique qualifications, and your background or platform.

Should I do anything to prepare?

Yes. Please do not meet with an agent if you have no idea what kind of material they handle, or an editor if you're completely unfamiliar with the publication. These appointments are brief, so learn what you can about the agent or outlet in advance.

What do I need to bring?

Enthusiasm, a friendly smile and a few good ideas. Oh, and lots of business cards. If you're meeting literary agents, you may want to bring a single-page description of your book idea. Don't bring copies of your entire book proposal to hand out.

How do I sign up?

The sign-up period (to enter the lottery for appointments) is 9 am, March 31 to 9 pm, April 5, 2020. Once the lottery opens (it is open for several days), you will sign up via the online system. This is the **only** way to sign up; signups cannot be taken by phone, fax, e-mail or on the ASJA forums. The sign-up page will provide information about the publications and people available to meet with. There is NO advantage in entering the lottery earlier rather than later in the sign-up period --as long as you enter your selections before the sign-up period closes. Once again, please ONLY sign up for appointments with people you really want to meet, and for publications/projects for which you are qualified.

Will I definitely get the appointments I want?

No. Client Connections is a lottery. Participants are available for a limited time during the event, and needless to say, certain people tend to be in high demand thus their slots fill up in the early rounds of the lottery.

Am I guaranteed to get *some* appointments?

No. Client Connections is a lottery. There is no guarantee that any of your picks will result in an appointment. There are many variables involved. In general, if you pick less-popular clients who are there for more time, your chances of getting appointments rise.

Are my editors/agents guaranteed to show up for my meeting(s)?

No. Unfortunately, every year there are clients that either get sick or have work emergencies, which force them to arrive late or cancel at the last minute. We will make best effort to reschedule meetings either later that day, or at a later date via telephone or Skype. *We have no control over these kinds of emergencies!

Can I swap appointments with other professional members?

No.

Will I be able to get new appointments onsite?

No, you will NOT be able to sign up for additional appointments onsite on the day of the event. The only way to register is during lottery sign up.

What if I miss the signup period?

We strongly encourage all ASJA professional members—new and veteran—to take note of the sign-up dates, which will be promoted well in advance. This will be the ONLY way to sign up for Client Connections.

What happens if I select just one or two people in the lottery?

If you make two choices then you get two chances in a random drawing for the people you picked.

How are appointments made?

Appointments are assigned through a software program adapted for Client Connections. The software provides everyone an equal chance of getting their selections.

What if I change my mind after I receive my list of appointments?

We strongly encourage members to make sure they really want to meet with the people they pick. If you decide to drop one of your appointments, you cannot get a different one once the list of meetings has been sent out to members.

What about my travel plans?

When you register for Client Connections, we (and the computer matching software) assume you will be available for the entire event, which runs from 2:00-5:00 pm. We strongly encourage you NOT to book travel during that block. If you are allotted a meeting and cannot make it due to your travel plans, we cannot change the meeting for you.

Is there a code of conduct governing the event?

Yes. By participating in Client Connections, you agree to act in a courteous and professional manner. This is a fast-paced event that must run smoothly to allow for successful meetings. Deviating even slightly from the rules (trying to remain at your meeting longer than the allotted time, for example) is very disruptive. Anyone who violates the rules will not be allowed to participate and may even be prohibited from participating in future events.

How can I help make Client Connections better?

We are always looking for clients to invite to Client Connections! If you'd like to share a contact that might be interested in participating, we warmly welcome that! Simply contact ASJA and we'll send you the invitation.