

# IAFP 2026: Networking

New Orleans, Louisiana • Build connections that last beyond the meeting

Quick guide to PDGs, receptions, lunches, coffee breaks, posters, and simple networking moves

Join PDGs

Meet someone new

Use lunches + breaks

Bring business cards



## Why Networking Matters

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- ◆ **IAFP mission:** IAFP provides food safety professionals worldwide with a forum to exchange information on protecting the food supply.
- ◆ **Annual Meeting value:** The Annual Meeting creates opportunities to network, share ideas, and engage with experts from industry, government, and academia who are passionate about food safety and collaboration.

## Professional Development Groups (PDGs)

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- ◆ **30+ topic groups:** IAFP has more than 30 PDGs focused on specific food safety topics.
- ◆ **Why attend:** PDGs discuss industry challenges, develop symposia, share research, and are one of the best ways to network within your field.
- ◆ **When:** Most PDG meetings occur on the first day of the conference: Sunday, July 26.
- ◆ **Shape future meetings:** PDGs play a major role in shaping future IAFP annual meeting content. Helping organize a symposium can connect you with diverse professionals.
- ◆ **Open to new people:** PDGs welcome new members: scan your badge, take a seat, and join the conversation.
- ◆ **Student tip:** The Student PDG is especially valuable for networking and career development.

## Built-In Networking Opportunities

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- ◆ **Saturday:** Welcome Reception: a casual gathering where you can meet new people.
- ◆ **Sunday:** New Member Informational Session, Opening Session, and Wine & Cheese Reception offer time to connect after PDGs and explore exhibitor booths.
- ◆ **Monday + Tuesday:** Exhibit Hall receptions include snacks and opportunities to engage with speakers and attendees.
- ◆ **Wednesday:** The Awards Banquet includes dinner and award presentations; gather colleagues and secure a table when doors open at 7:00 PM.
- ◆ **Lunches:** A student lunch is offered Sunday for students with pre-purchased tickets, and free networking lunches are held in the Exhibit Hall Monday-Wednesday.
- ◆ **Coffee breaks:** Morning and afternoon coffee breaks Monday-Wednesday are easy times to start conversations.

## Simple Networking Moves

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- ◆ **Poster sessions:** Engage with researchers, discuss their work, and build connections in your area of interest.
- ◆ **Hallway moments:** While walking the halls, waiting for sessions, or browsing the Exhibit Hall, introduce yourself to people around you.
- ◆ **Business cards:** Bring plenty of business cards and exchange contact information with potential collaborators.
- ◆ **Take notes:** Write notes on the back of cards so you remember key details from each conversation.
- ◆ **Big picture:** IAFP has always been about both food safety and people. The connections you make here can influence your career for years to come.

**Tip:** Grab a drink or snack, say hello, and follow up—the best IAFP connections often start with one conversation.

Student Lunch requires a pre-purchased ticket • Most PDGs meet Sunday, July 26