

# Why Should You Attend NARTS Conference?

**The next NARTS Conference will be June 28 to 30, 2024 in St. Louis, MO. With 2024 freshly upon us, now is the time to start “putting your pitch together” to get approval to attend. By showing your Executive Director and/or Board of Directors that you have put some thought behind the reasons for attending and the benefits you and your team will glean from Conference, you increase the likelihood for approval.**

NARTS Conference provides a diverse learning opportunity to gather information, shape best practices, accumulate fresh ideas and leverage experience. There is always something to learn that can potentially provide incremental revenue to cover the cost of attendance. Conference is a forum to get energized, rejuvenated and excited about the resale industry. After all, NARTS is the largest Resale Association in the world with over 1,000 members! Conference makes you look at things in a different light. It provides networking opportunities with others that validates what is being done right and identifies areas and processes that can be improved.



**—Kevin Campbell**  
NARTS Past Board Member  
Home of the Sparrow

While the majority of attendees at NARTS Conferences are for profit entities, there is a robust NFP presence as well. There are common ground issues that both for profit and NFP resale encounters. There is ample opportunity and resources to help address specific NFP issues. Conference is about coming together and sharing. Resale has moved away from the “cluttered, low end” thrift shop reputation to a more professional, competitive business model. Conference helps build your brand!

Running a nonprofit resale social enterprise presents some unique challenges unlike those of a for profit resale business. We must deal with the Board, volunteers, donors and clients while finding the balance between social responsibility and profitability. It is our charge not just to provide revenue for our organizations but to provide service to the community as well. Everything we do, every decision we make is a process. In order to attend NARTS Conference, planning must be done in advance to insure that the cost can be financially absorbed. The expense must be justified because every dollar spent on operations, administration and professional development translates into fewer dollars available to serve our clients.

On the NARTS website, there is a Justification Toolkit which can be found at [www.narts.org/just](http://www.narts.org/just). The toolkit includes a sample letter, an expense worksheet, this *Why Should You Attend NARTS Conference* article, and the Conference agenda and workshops. The justification toolkit is a “one stop shop” for developing your business plan to attend. Use all the tools or choose the one that will help your case the most. The toolkit is also useful to For Profit stores to create your conference budget or convince your boss or business partner about the benefits of attending conference.

### **Tactics to consider to get to Conference...**

- Use the justification toolkit to put together a presentation for your Board that outlines the cost/benefit analysis as to why it will be worth the investment for a representative (or representatives) from your organization to attend.
- Talk to your Board members and key agency stake holders in advance to acquire their support.
- Work with the Development group and Grant Writers. Perhaps money can be donated for education and training. See if you can get a volunteer or major donor to underwrite the first trip.
- Partner with other nonprofit or profit resale shops in your surrounding area to share in the expense of the hotel.
- Get a list of nonprofits who have attended and talk to them about the advantages of attending.

### **Key benefits of attending...**

- Information! Information! Information!
- Best practices, Cost-saving solutions, Creative ideas
- New perspective, New excitement, New attitude, New friendships
- Networking, collective experience of fun and professional development.

**We would love to have you join us at Conference this year,  
you have value to share. We want to hear it!**

Kevin Campbell, a NARTS Past Board Member, worked for Home of the Sparrow, Inc. a not for profit 501(c)3 agency that provides transitional shelter and services to homeless women and children in Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin. In his prior role as Vice President Retail, Campbell oversaw all retail and logistics operations for their seven Sparrow's Nest Thrift Store and Donation Centers located in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. The Nest stores range from 7,200 sq. ft. to 13,000 sq. ft. Sales Revenue from the Nest Stores accounts for over 55% of the Agency income. Previous to joining Home of the Sparrow, Kevin amassed 35 years of corporate retail experience with Sears and Albertsons.