

## INTRODUCTION

The National AfterSchool Association (NAA) is committed to fostering an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment for all participants. Our events are opportunities for professional growth, community building, and advancing our shared mission to support youth through afterschool and out-of-school time programming. By participating in NAA events, you agree to uphold these values and help create a space where all people feel respected, valued, and empowered to engage fully.

## GENERAL PROPOSAL INFORMATION:

### **What are you looking for in a presenter in 2026?**

We seek diverse content, varied formats, and experienced presenters to provide engaged learning experiences. Presenters should be able to share valuable and actionable professional development that elevates the field and builds the capacity of professionals participating in the convention. A good presenter will center and engage participants. Presenters will provide participants with the knowledge, tools, resources, and strategies they need.

### **Do I need to be an NAA member to be a presenter?**

No, but NAA membership shows commitment to the community and helps you understand the content we are looking to integrate into NAA26.

### **I've presented at NAA Convention and my session was top-rated. Can we submit this session again?**

If a session was popular and remains timely, you may resubmit it.

### **I'm planning to co-present with another presenter. Do I need to have all of their information at the time of submission?**

Yes. Presenter and co-presenter profile information is required upfront and needs to be included in the proposal submission. This allows us to announce sessions and presenters as soon as proposals are selected and confirmed, which allows participants to make the most informed choices when deciding whether to attend the Convention or which sessions to join.

### **If my proposal is accepted, what is my deadline for Convention registration?**

To confirm your acceptance and agreement to present, accepted presenters and co-presenters must register for the Convention by December 15, 2025 using the specific process communicated by [presenters@naaweb.org](mailto:presenters@naaweb.org).

## How should proposals incorporate the NAA26 theme, “Dream. Dare. Do”?

The 2026 theme, Dream. Dare. Do, calls on presenters and participants to imagine bold futures for young people and the field, take courageous steps forward, and act with purpose and power. Successful proposals will move beyond sharing updates or best practices to inspire vision, bravery, and action. Presenters are encouraged to highlight innovative ideas, promising practices, and stories of impact that spark imagination and motivate the field to lead with courage. Sessions should also cultivate an inclusive atmosphere that values diverse perspectives, encourages participation, and empowers attendees to leave with both inspiration and practical strategies they can implement.

## Which type of presentations are most likely to be selected?

All submissions are considered against the provided rubric, but those most likely to be selected are proposals that adhere to the following key principles:

- **Clarity:** Your session proposal should clearly present its topic and methodology. Clearly articulate the session’s relevance to the OST field and **NAA’s Core Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies**. Ensure that both the title and description provide a clear and unambiguous understanding of the session's focus and objectives, making it easy for participants to grasp the session's importance and potential impact.
- **CKSC Alignment:** Proposals should strongly align with NAA’s strategic focus areas and **NAA’s Core Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies**. We receive many proposals for CKSCs 1 and 2, but other content areas are just as critical to our work. For example, sessions focused on job quality, including professional development, employee voice, and opportunities for advancement, align with CKSC 10. Sessions on practices that encourage inclusion and belonging for working with young people and with adults and disability inclusion align with CKSC 6. We also receive relatively few proposals for working with those from rural communities or for older youth, which could fall under several CKSCs and would also be a priority.
- **Topic:** Your topic should be timely, relevant, and solutions-oriented. Your proposal should use out-of-school time language rather than school-day language (for example, program vs. classroom; young people vs. students).

## What parts of the proposal are shared with Convention participants?

The title and public program description will be transferred directly into the online Convention schedule and app. Please ensure your proposal is submitted exactly as you would want it to be shared publicly.

### **Can the same presenter submit for multiple sessions?**

Yes. The proposals would have to be two distinct topics and/or two different formats.

### **Is there someone to whom we can pitch an idea before submitting to ensure it is a good fit?**

The proposal submission is the pitch. We recommend running your idea by colleagues and seeking support from other professionals or leaders in your network, your state affiliate, or social media.

### **What are the different types of sessions and how do they work?**

#### **Workshop: 60 minutes**

Interactive sessions with activities that involve participants.

#### **Leadership Intensive: 2 hours**

Leadership Intensives are deep dive experiences for current and emerging leaders with content focused on (must select one of the following):

- Equity and inclusion (CKSC 6)
- Family, school, and community relationships (CKSC 7)
- Program planning and development (CKSC 9)
- Professional development and leadership (CKSC 10)

#### **Community Conversation: 60 minutes**

A unique type of session where participants engage in small or large group discussions about a specific critical topic. Skilled facilitators introduce the topic and set the stage for discussion rather than sharing subject matter expertise.

#### **Story Showcase: 7 minutes or less**

Our version of TED talks featuring NAA community members! During a general session, speakers perform a 7-minute talk with a clear takeaway related to the NAA26 theme - Dare, Dream, Do! Explain a unique personal story that exemplifies the theme and offers the audience related advice or tips.

*Submit the initial written proposal now, and if chosen as a finalist by 11/15, you will be invited to submit a short video by 12/1, with final presenters notified by 12/11/23.*

#### **Spark: 30 minutes**

Quick informational presentations with key takeaways.

## SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL EXAMPLE

**Title:** Why Choose Choices?

**Session Type:** Workshop

**Public Program Description:**

Learning to make good choices is an essential step toward becoming a responsible citizen and leading a productive, safe, and healthy life. This workshop will discuss the importance of teaching and allowing children to make choices, help you evaluate how well your program provides for choice making opportunities, and give you practical tips and activities to help you guide children in making good choices.

**Session Plan Outline:**

This workshop was created to share how important it is to allow children to make choices and educate school age professionals on how they can guide children in making good choices. Following is an outline describing the topics:

1. Welcome and Introduction

2. Objectives:

To discuss why children need the opportunity to make decisions and choices

To evaluate how well your program provides for individual choice making opportunities

To share ideas to help children learn how to make choices.

To participate in choice making activities that can be incorporated into school age programs.

3. Group Discussion: Why Choices?

4. Individual Activity: Evaluation of choice making opportunities. What choices are you really giving them?

5. Strategy Sharing: 5 Tips for Making Effective Choices and Guidelines for Offering Choices

6. Group Activity: Participate in “Take Your Choice”, “Choices, Choices, Everywhere”, and “The Shoe is on the Other Foot”, “What If...”, and “What Shall We Do?”, activities that help children become aware of making choices, to illustrate how choices can affect others, to help children understand that choices have consequences.

7. Review: Game checking for understanding of information presented

Closure: Share how information will be incorporated at different programs

**Session Relevance:**

When young people are empowered to make choices, they develop the confidence and responsibility needed to thrive in school and life. This session offers afterschool professionals practical strategies to build youth voice into everyday programming, creating environments that honor decision-making and strengthen engagement. Participants will explore interactive activities that promote agency, responsibility, and community-mindedness — skills that benefit young people long after program hours end.

***The session will support professionals to (select one):***

- Apply - know and subsequently show concepts and content in practice.

***Select the MOST relevant CKSC:***

CKSC 4,5 - Relationships and Interactions with Children and Youth // Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice

**Why does this proposal work?**

This proposal offers valuable, relevant information when evaluated against the NAA26 proposal rubric:

**Presenter Qualifications & Delivery**

- The topic draws directly on the presenter's professional experience working with school-age children and supporting staff, demonstrating subject matter expertise.
- The proposal references adult learning principles and outlines varied methods (discussion, individual reflection, activities), signaling presenter skill in facilitation.

**Content Quality, Learning Value, and Participant Engagement**

- Title & description are concise, engaging, and accurately capture the focus on youth choice and decision-making.
- Detailed session plan includes objectives, group discussions, strategy sharing, interactive activities, and a closing reflection. This shows logical progression and strong pacing.
- Multiple engagement strategies (discussion, self-assessment, games, applied activities) are explicitly described and appropriate for adult learners.
- Content is practical and actionable: participants leave with concrete tools, activities, and frameworks to use immediately.

**Session Relevance & Alignment**

- Strongly aligned with CKSC 5: Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice, with a focus on embedding youth agency in daily practice.
- The Apply level is appropriate, since participants are expected to practice strategies and integrate them into their programs.
- Topic is timely and high-impact: youth voice and choice are central to funding, policy, and program quality frameworks.
- The proposal clearly articulates why the topic matters: empowering youth with decision-making skills strengthens engagement, responsibility, and long-term success.
- Directly supports NAA's mission of advancing quality afterschool experiences by equipping professionals with tools to foster youth development.