#NSPA2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) is seeking relevant and engaging sessions for its Annual Conference, **EmpowerED 2024**. Held in Salt Lake City, **October 15-18**, the NSPA Conference offers high-quality programs and provides an opportunity for scholarship, college access, and student support professionals to learn, network, and share their knowledge and experience.

The NSPA invites you to submit proposals for sessions targeted to an audience diligently working to ensure college access, completion, and success for all students. This is an excellent opportunity to share innovative ideas and practices that transform our programs, the scholarship industry, and society!

Who are we looking for?

Conference presenters are typically one or more of the following:

- **Topic experts** - Experts in their fields and skilled at educating scholarship providers and/or institution representatives in diverse areas including program and organizational management, professional development, technology, leadership, marketing, or related topics of interest.
- **Experienced trainers** – About 700 scholarship professionals attend the NSPA Conference each year. Whether a session has 12 people or more than 100, Conference presenters know how to build a well-paced, thought-provoking, and engaging learning experience.
- **Collaborative leaders** - We invite speakers to team up with others in the scholarship community to deliver sessions that offer diverse perspectives, examples of successful partnerships, and innovative solutions. We welcome joint sessions from institutions, outside providers, and community partnerships to provide examples of how you work with others toward college access and success. We encourage you to invite colleagues and those from BIPOC communities to join you as co-presenters. If you are interested in connecting with potential co-presenters, you can do so through this [Google Spreadsheet](#).

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Proposals are due **Tuesday, April 2, 2024**, and must be completed through this [online form](#). Late proposals will not be accepted. Preview the submission form at [this link](#). **All submitting authors will be notified whether their proposal has been accepted by Friday, May 24, 2024**.

The NSPA receives more session proposals than we can accommodate at our Conference. Proposals will be reviewed by members of the 2024 Conference Planning Committee and the NSPA staff. Conference sessions will be selected based on the following criteria. Sessions that do not get selected for the Conference will be considered for webinars.

- **Relevance**: Is the topic highly relevant to the scholarship field, the Conference theme, and our audience?
- **Clarity**: Does the description give a clear, concise picture of what the presentation will include?
- **Objectives**: Are the objectives clear and can they be met realistically in the time allowed?
- **Solutions and Takeaways**: Will the attendees leave with solid, real-world information and learning outcomes that they can implement? If you’re presenting a program model or other best practice, be prepared to share how specific program components may be used at other organizations, programs, or institutions.
- **Engagement**: Does the presentation provide sufficient opportunities for audience engagement such as discussion, group brainstorming, small group activities, creating personalized plans for implementation, Q&A, etc.?
- **Applicability**: Can the workshop information be applied in a variety of programs and settings?
- **Diverse Perspectives**: Does the session offer multiple perspectives, solutions, or innovations to enhance scholarship programming?
Tips for Effective Session Titles and Descriptions

How you write your session title and description can determine whether attendees are drawn to your session or not. Think about how to succinctly describe the focus of your session. What about it will pique attendees’ interest? What will they gain from attending? Below are a few tips to help you get started.

- **Appeal to the WIIFM (What’s in It for Me) mindset.** Highlight how the presentation will help scholarship providers do their job better and provide useful takeaways.
- **Be a problem solver.** Most conference sessions address a problem or challenge and propose effective solutions. Use your description to help readers connect with the problem (That sounds familiar!) and want the solution (Sounds interesting; I should check it out).
- **Set accurate expectations.** Make sure the description accurately describes what the session will cover.
- **Appeal to people’s purpose.** Improving outcomes for students is the point of our work. Don’t talk around this, but rather point right to it.
- **Eliminate filler words and phrases.** Skip phrases like, “In this presentation, presenters will....” and get right to the focus of the session content.
- **Do not repeat yourself.** Often, presenters simply rewrite the same idea in different ways without imparting new information. Avoid this practice.
- **Use active tense.** Instead of “Strategies to improve student behavior will be examined”, opt for “Learn strategies to improve student outcomes.”
- **Spend some time on the title.** This is your lead—the idea that will grab people’s attention from the get-go and may be the only thing they read. Think about what matters to your potential attendees, not just the topic itself. The title should convey relevance, usefulness, and specificity.

- **Utilize Generative AI.** Explore the free version of Spark AI for assistance with crafting your session description, writing your bio, brainstorming session ideas, generating session polls, and more!
- **Review!** Ask at least one colleague to review your submission to ensure your title and description are concise, clear, and capture the intent of your session.

Examples of Effective Session Titles and Descriptions

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Every Day in Every Way**

In this session, participants will receive an overview of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and its many dimensions, as well as how best to integrate strategies in support of this at the operational level. We will use the case study of Jeannette Rankin Foundation’s DEI journey, including board recruitment, volunteer application readers, scholars, staff, and vendors. You will be able to identify both strengths within your organization and potential gaps with the goal of creating a plan that ensures you have a DEI-centered organization.

**Support Students and Save Your Sanity**

Do you love scholarships, but feel overwhelmed, overworked, and burnt out by administrative responsibilities? Are you unsure if your work is connected to your organization as a whole or actually helping students? Join us to discuss strategies for creating a streamlined, mission-focused scholarship program that builds in opportunities for student and alumni involvement and feedback. (Don’t worry—it will also make donors and your data-loving colleagues happy, too!) You’ll also receive a resource toolkit to help you get started.

**Cultivating Grit in Our Students and Ourselves**

Grit, the disposition to pursue long-term goals with passion and perseverance, has been shown to predict success over and beyond measures of talent. In fact, growing numbers of scholarship providers have used grit and its indicators in their programming. Dr. Lauren Eskreis-Winkler, working extensively with grit research pioneer Angela Duckworth, has proven that grit can be encouraged and cultivated through deliberate practice. In this session, she will share not only why grit is important, but how it’s malleable, and ready to be cultivated in anyone, including our scholars – and ourselves.

Reduced Registration for Presenters

We are pleased to offer a limited number of $100 need-based scholarships toward Conference registration to presenters, by request, on a first-come, first-served basis. Request a scholarship during the proposal submission process.
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SUBMIT PROPOSALS AT BIT.LY/NSPA2024RFP

**PRESENTER EXPECTATIONS**

By submitting a proposal to EmpowerED, I understand that, if accepted:

- I, along with my co-presenter(s), must register for the Conference and pay the registration fee. A limited number of $100 need-based scholarships are available by request, on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Complimentary or further discounted registrations are not available.
- A submission of a proposal implies a commitment to deliver the presentation as outlined in the proposal.
- My proposal demonstrates a commitment to provide applicable solutions and takeaways that attendees can bring back to their organizations or institutions.
- All materials for my presentation must be submitted to the NSPA by the listed deadlines.
- An NSPA-branded PowerPoint template must be used for all presentations.
- I give my permission and authorize the NSPA to record, edit, or otherwise reproduce my presentation.
- I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the NSPA against any claims arising out of my presentation, including, but not limited to, claims of copyright infringement, defamation, and misrepresentation.
- The NSPA may promote my workshop presentation on social media (including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) leading up to, during, and after the Conference.
- The NSPA reserves the right to refine session titles and descriptions for marketing and continuity purposes.

**Note to Affiliates**

Affiliates are not-for-profit or for-profit companies or organizations that design and create software, offer scholarship management services, or offer services or products for students or scholarship providers.

NSPA will consider proposals for breakout sessions or workshops from Affiliates if ALL the following criteria are met:

- The session’s focus is professional development.
- The presenting company is a current EmpowerED 2024 sponsor and/or exhibitor.
- The session does not advertise or promote the company’s products or services.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal outside of those parameters, consider one of the following two options:

- Purchase a Sponsor or Exhibitor Package that includes an Exhibitor Demo. Exhibitor demos are 30-minute sessions to showcase your products and services. In-person and virtual demo sessions will be offered. Demos are included in top-level sponsor and exhibitor packages and can also be purchased as add-ons. Demo submission information will be emailed to all current sponsors and exhibitors.
- Purchase a Sponsor or Exhibitor Package that includes a Thought Leadership benefit. Top sponsors and exhibitors have the option to provide thought leadership by presenting or moderating sessions OR through a blog post. The NSPA community is interested in best practices in scholarship program administration as well as new trends and research in higher education. Proposals on any topic will be accepted but advertising of company products or services during these sessions will not be permitted.

**Questions?**

Contact programs@scholarshipproviders.org or 303-442-2524 Ext. 300.
SESSION AND AUDIENCE INFORMATION

EmpowerED Theme and Description

Shaping an Equitable Future through Scholarship Excellence

EmpowerED 2024 is more than a conference; it's a platform for change. Join us as we collectively shape an equitable future through the power of scholarships. Master holistic student support strategies, learn about current scholarship policies and legal considerations, dive into ideas for effective collaborations, explore cutting-edge methods to evaluate scholarship impact, and unleash the power of building inclusive pathways with equitable outcomes. Be part of the conversation, network with industry leaders, and take actionable insights back to your organization. Together, let's empower education for all.

Your proposal should fit one of the following session types:

- **Breakout Session** (60 minutes) – interactive presentations on a variety of issues and topics.
- **Workshop** (90 minutes) – in-depth and often applied sessions with a topic or issue expert.
- **Ignite Presentation** (10 minutes) - a fun, quick, and informative 10-minute presentation that focuses on a specific scholar population or shares a good practice, effective program model, or trick of the trade. Ignite Sessions are 90 minutes long and accommodate up to 8 presentations with time for questions at the end. Our format is loosely based on the [Ignite Model](#).

**Audience**

The NSPA Conference hosts approximately 700 scholarship, college access, and college success professionals in various roles at the following organizational types:

- 2- and 4-Year Colleges and Universities (Scholarship, Financial Aid, Development, and Admissions Departments)
- Private Foundations
- Public Charities
- Community Foundations
- College Access and Degree-Attainment Focused Organizations
- Nonprofits
- K-12 Schools
- Guidance Counselors, Student Support Specialists, College and Scholarship Advisors
- Associations
- Corporations
- Government and Policymakers
- Researchers
- Product and Service Providers

The NSPA Conference attendees represent small to large organizations with a wide range of experiences. Attendees may be new professionals, those who have spent decades helping students achieve their higher education goals, and those in between—it’s a collegial and collaborative group!

**REQUESTED SESSIONS**

We are looking for session proposals that will fit into one of the following five tracks and topic areas, but proposals on any relevant topic are welcome. **Presenters from under-represented and marginalized groups and those from colleges and universities are especially encouraged to submit session proposals.**

[Click here](#) for EmpowerED 2024 session ideas.