



TFN's 25th Anniversary Conference March 17-19, 2025 | Baltimore

SESSION PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

We invite you to submit a session proposal for **TFN's 25th Anniversary Conference: Be Bold Together**, which brings together funders from across North America to deepen learning, foster collaboration and catalyze action.

The Funders Network's 25th Anniversary Conference is March 17 – 19, 2025 in Baltimore, Md.

Our 25th Anniversary Conference theme — Be Bold Together —emphasizes the need for courageous action and meaningful collaboration to deploy resources where they are most needed, and push for powerful and creative strategies to address environmental, economic and racial injustice.

We look forward to coming together in Baltimore to amplify the work that is making an impact on people, places and policies, especially strategies that center historically marginalized and under-resourced communities. Please read on for more information on how to submit a session proposal for TFN's 25th Anniversary Conference.

The deadline to submit a conference proposal is May 24, 2024.

ABOUT OUR CONFERENCE

TFN's conference offers attendees in-depth information, practical experience to enhance their skills, and opportunities to share their learning in a particular area of interest.

Each proposal will be reviewed by our planning committee to ensure a compelling and thought-provoking experience for conference attendees. On the submission form, you will be asked to indicate if you are interested in serving as a session designer if the proposal is selected, or if you are just suggesting a topic for consideration (either approach is welcome!).

TFN strongly encourages proposals that center issues of racial equity and power shifting.

Below are the types of sessions and workshops we will offer at our 25th Anniversary Conference: Be Bold Together. Workshops and concurrent sessions should include presentations, as well as group activities and discussions to help participants apply learning to their work. Skill-building workshops are two-and-a-half hours, concurrent sessions are one hour and forty-five minutes and critical conversations are one hour and fifteen minutes.

SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS & CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Skill-Building Workshops: We are planning to include up to four workshops, each two-and-a-half hours, that provide attendees with skills and best practices. These workshops should not be talking head presentations but rather should include active learning, and attention to outcomes. Activities and discussions should be woven into the workshop plan to help attendees apply the information to their work. Examples of Skill-building Workshop topics include centering racial equity in grantmaking, equitable evaluation, communications, advocacy, impact investing, and using positional power beyond grantmaking.

Concurrent Sessions: For the concurrent sessions, we're encouraging proposals that are interdisciplinary in their approach and highlight innovative work at the intersection of multiple issues. For example, if the primary theme of a proposal is environmental sustainability, we want to understand the relationship of that work to equity and the economy. This is meant to help encourage cross-cutting thinking and session design.

These are sessions focused on learning from funder peers and community partners, with speakers presenting information on a relevant topic, issue, strategy, or challenge. The session format should include an introduction, context setting, and presentation of background information on the topic or issue. Speakers will give opening presentations, followed by an exchange of ideas and discussion between the speakers and attendees. This session is for one hour and forty-five minutes and will focus on problem-solving or collaborative strategy and new practices. Examples of concurrent sessions include collaborative governance, clean energy economy, reparations, equitable leadership pathways.

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

Critical Conversations are an opportunity to have frank, open, peer-facilitated exchanges of ideas and experiences, and perhaps learn a little bit about each other in the process. Each session will be led by a facilitator with a deep personal or professional connection to the topic. (Here are some examples of Critical Conversations from our [#TFN2021 Virtual Conference](#).)

MOBILE WORKSHOPS

Mobile Workshops are an integral part of our goal to “learn from place.” Mobile Workshops are intended to showcase the efforts of local funders and practitioners working to strengthen their communities and regions. They provide the opportunity to engage community leaders/advocates who will share compelling and inspirational stories. We seek proposals that provide participants with learning more about Baltimore’s sustainability, economic, and equity initiatives. Your workshop proposal should allow for direct engagement with local initiatives, allowing attendees to absorb the essence of the city’s transformative efforts.

In your proposal, please outline communities to be visited, local partners we will hear from, and the successful practices and models we will hear about. We encourage proposals that are not only innovative and engaging but also provide a comprehensive sensory experience through various modes of transportation such as walking, biking, or boating etc. Mobile workshop proposals should be designed with accessibility in mind, ensuring inclusivity for all participants, regardless of their abilities. We look forward to receiving your proposal.

REVIEW AND SELECTION

We value the diverse voices of our members and partners and welcome the opportunity to amplify work making an impact across a variety of topics. In keeping with TFN policy, we will offer honoraria for non-profit speakers and performing artists featured on the conference agenda. Funder session designers will be invited to contribute to honoraria and travel costs for non-funder speakers/performers associated with the final sessions. Please note that this is an optional and not an obligatory invitation.

We do not intend this practice to be a barrier to participating in session design opportunities, calls for proposals, etc. Instead, it is part of TFN's commitment to be more mindful, deliberate and equitable in our planning for events.

We're looking for dynamic, strategic, and informative proposals for skill building workshops, concurrent sessions, critical conversations, and mobile workshops, particularly those that advance TFN's interdisciplinary approach to environment, equity, and economy. Proposals for workshops and sessions should:

- Be timely and relevant.
- Have an interdisciplinary approach that addresses more than one issue.
- Focus on place, including Tribal, urban and rural regions and communities.
- Lift up policy as well as programmatic responses to issues.
- Include diversity of speakers (by sector, types and sizes of foundations, perspectives, populations, generations, and experiences).
- Consider collaboration across sectors and among funders.
- **Encourage interaction and discussion using creative formats.**

Proposals should also include background on the issue(s) addressed or skills to be strengthened, how the session will be designed, and desired outcomes of the sessions. Where possible sessions should also articulate:

- Philanthropic practice and funder roles.
- The types of grant or investment strategies being implemented.
- How the work provides new models, tools, collaborative opportunities, or innovation.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this call for proposals, please reach out to Lesmarie Nicholson at lesmarie@fundersnetwork.org.