



Memphis, Tennessee | September 24-26, 2024

## Call for Session Proposals

**DUE: February 9, 2024**

Are you ready to **SHIFT** toward an equitable future? The National Fund for Workforce Solutions invites you to propose a session for [SHIFT Toward an Equitable Future](#), our premier biennial convening focused on workforce equity. Please submit your proposal using this [online form](#) by **11:59 p.m. Eastern on Friday, February 9, 2024**.

At SHIFT, approximately 400 workforce practitioners, employers, funders, and community partners come together for two days of ideas, inspiration, and action. This is where the workforce development ecosystem comes together to think differently about workforce development.

Please read the following information carefully before beginning your submission. You can also access a copy of the [session submission questions](#) so that you can plan your responses before submitting in the online form by the due date.

### What We're Looking For

We are looking for sessions that align with the National Fund's vision for an equitable future where **workers have the resources required to thrive, race does not dictate employment outcomes, and all jobs are good jobs.**

Our goal is to elevate your best ideas, whether proven, promising, or totally innovative. We seek sessions that will empower everyone in the room with knowledge they can apply in their communities and have impact across the field.



Here are the conversations we are eager to curate:

- **External dynamics affecting work in this country** such as artificial intelligence, the Supreme Court decision on affirmative action, climate change, and so much more!
- Shifts needed to advance **job quality**, including practical examples from business, for business, and the implications of the evolving social contract between workers and employers.
- Impacts of **federal investments and other funding** in workforce development, including the approach communities have taken to ensure equitable access to these investments.
- Updates to traditional models or new approaches in workforce development that **advance racial equity** or **address occupational segregation**.
- Efforts to engage in **systems change** across the many systems that drive workforce equity, including transportation, housing, child care, etc.
- New **metrics and approaches to data analysis** to help us get to a fuller picture of needs for workers, employers, and communities.

We seek proposals that encourage active learning, introduce or show the application of practical tools, lift up good ideas, dig into relevant research, or propose something totally new (even if it's just beginning to take shape and has promise).

Also, if you have a great idea that doesn't quite align with the list above, then we'd still like to hear from you. Submit your idea!

## Session Details

**Length and scope.** We are designing three types of sessions, all of which will run concurrently for the 400 attendees:

- **30-minute Spotlights.** 1-2 speakers describing a specific practice, approach, or story for about 20 minutes with 10 minutes of Q&A. Your inspiration: low-fi TED Talk. We expect to have several of these across the two days.
- **1-hour Submersions.** 2-4 speakers going deep on a specific topic or idea where multiple perspectives are helpful for deep understanding. Your inspiration: the most engaging conversation you've had with friends or colleagues. We expect to have approximately 20 of these across the two days.
- **2.5-hour Studios.** A place for attendees to roll up their sleeves and try out a specific tool in depth. All tools must be available for free to attendees. Your inspiration: that improv class you've been eager to try (if improv isn't your jam, then any participatory class will do). We expect to have just a few of these over the two days. We will limit Studio attendance to the number of participants that best aligns with content.

**Timing.** Speakers must commit to participating in their session whenever it is scheduled during the agenda September 25-26, 2024.

**Materials.** Presenters should grant permission for distribution of supplemental materials used during their session. All materials will be made available electronically on the mobile conference app. Presenters are responsible for bringing their own hard copy of materials, if desired.

**Costs.** All speakers and presenters are responsible for costs associated with attending the convening, including registration and travel. The National Fund has some full and partial scholarships available to support registration and facilitate thoughtful speaker composition (see below) and will be allocated based on need. We will ask speakers interested in scholarship funds to contact the National Fund directly about availability upon session selection. More details will be provided.

*The National Fund reserves the right to adjust or make recommendations to final session designs, including speaker lineup, session format, and description.*

## Suggestions for Submitting a Strong Proposal

The National Fund gives priority consideration to session proposals that demonstrate:

**Relevant content:** Your session provides practical, actionable insights for attendees who are engaged in workforce development and other systems that advance workforce equity. Attendees appreciate examples of what you've learned, what worked and what didn't work, and the lessons that can help to inform the work in their communities.

**Thoughtful speaker composition:** Your session brings together diverse speakers who are meaningfully connected to the proposed topic and can speak from their unique perspectives and point of view. Diverse perspectives might include, and are not limited to, racial, ethnic, gender identities, sexual orientation, veteran status, age, persons with disability, and different roles. The National Fund values the inclusion of workers and business leaders as speakers in sessions. Session designers are encouraged to provide an honorarium for workers who are speaking at their session.

**Clear session objective and engaging design:** You clearly describe what attendees can expect from attending your session and what they will take away. For Submersions and Studios, you've considered how to creatively engage your audience and address their questions.

**Focus on learning, not selling:** Sessions that focus on or have an undercurrent of selling/highlighting products or services will not be selected.

All proposals must be submitted [through this link](#) by February 9, 2024.

## Important Dates

- Release call for proposals: January 8, 2024
- Proposal submissions due: February 9, 2024
- Sessions selected and presenters notified: March 29, 2024
- Registration open: April 2024
- Final materials and handouts (to be made available electronically) due: September 2, 2024
- Additional information will be required from presenters, including bios and headshots: date TBD

## Questions

Questions about session submissions may be directed to Hollie Marston at [hmarston@nationalfund.org](mailto:hmarston@nationalfund.org).

# Thank you!

