CALL FOR PROPOSALS GUIDING INFORMATION

This document provides guidance on how to help submit a strong proposal

Begin your submission here

All submissions must be completed by Monday, March 23

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Timeline of Deliverables

Deliverable	Deadline
Open Call for Proposals	Friday, February 6, 2026
Close Call for Proposals	Monday, March 23, 2026
Review Completed by Planning Committee	Completed by Thursday, April 2
In-Person Planning Committee Meeting	April 8-10
Notification to Accepted Presenters*	By Friday, May 1
All Session Titles Finalized by	Friday, July 17
Speaker and Moderator Training	Tuesday, July 28 3:00 PM EST
All Materials Submitted for CE Approval	Friday, July 31
Final Presentation Materials Due	Friday, September 4
First Day of Conference	Sunday, September 27

*Track E Notifications will be completed by June 30

Intent for the Event and Call for Proposals

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is proud to produce the annual ISM Education Conference & Expo. As the premier event for technology and innovation in the human services sector, we bring together leaders from state, county, and federal agencies alongside industry professionals in explore the latest technologies, innovations, and leading trends in human services technology products and services. Hosted by the IT Solutions Management for Human Services (ISM) Affinity Group, this year's conference will be held at the beautiful Spokane Convention Center, September 27-30, 2026, in Spokane, WA. Join the nation's brightest leaders, innovators, and changemakers as we come together to listen, learn, and inspire one another to build strategies for improving the lives of individuals, children, and families across the United States and beyond.

This year's theme, *Transforming Systems Through Technology & Innovation,* serves as our guide as we invite you to submit your session proposals. We will provide opportunities for human services leaders from states, counties, municipalities, tribes, and territories to connect with federal officials and leading firms in the technology and innovation sector; to learn best practices, policy insights, and technology innovations; and to develop their leadership skills.

We are seeking inspiring submissions that:

- **Highlight innovative policy, practice, and system approaches to** outcome measurement and impact evaluation; data analytics and interoperability; technology and service delivery; social impact, community engagement; emergency preparedness and crisis-response; funding and procurement strategies, and other pressing issue areas across the human services ecosystem.
- **Elevate the important work of the human services sector** in empowering and strengthening families and driving meaningful, sustainable change in our communities as demonstrated in research, program evaluations, project outcomes, success stories.
- **Showcasing leadership strategies** that foster a sense of resilience, workforce well-being, productive collaboration, and deep impact.

American Public Human Services Association

How Content Will Be Organized

The next two pages highlight the areas in which we will organize the content.

CONTENT WILL BE ORGANIZED AROUND THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Tech-Enabled Innovation – *Turning possibility into practice through technology*
  - Step into the future of human services and explore how technology is reshaping how agencies serve families and support the workforce. This focus area highlights emergent and disruptive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), automation, cloud platforms, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure. Sessions will showcase practical implementations, modernization efforts, and lessons learned from deploying technology at scale, focusing on usability, sustainability, and readiness rather than hype alone.
- **People-Powered & Human-Centered Design** – *Design with people, not for them*
  - Discover how human services systems are being transformed when communities, clients, and frontline staff are placed at the center of design. This focus area spotlights participatory frameworks, co-design practices, and human-centered design (HCD) approaches that strengthen service delivery and agency capacity. Sessions will feature community-led solutions, workforce-driven redesigns, and inclusive design practices that improve accessibility, trust, and real-world usability across programs and platforms.
- **Cross-Systems & Policy-Informed Alignment** – *where policy, practice, and systems meet*
  - Learn how agencies are breaking down silos to deliver more coordinated, effective services across programs and partners. This focus area explores cross-system collaboration, interoperability, and operational change management that align policy, technology, and service delivery. Sessions will highlight how evidence-informed policy decisions and implementation data are used to guide system integration, navigate regulatory complexity, and support scalable, compliant, and person-centered solutions.

CONTENT WILL BE ORGANIZED AROUND THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Data-Driven & Evidence-Informed Program Delivery – *From insight to impact*
  - See how data and evidence are being translated into smarter decisions, stronger accountability, and better outcomes. This focus area focuses on the use of data sharing, analytics, performance management, and evaluation to inform program operations and continuous improvement. Sessions will highlight how agencies apply evidence-based and evidence-informed practices to measure impact, reduce disparities, protect privacy, and drive operational changes that improve accuracy and service effectiveness.
- NEW: The Possibility Lab – *A space to imagine what could be*
  - Step into a space designed for imagination, exploration, and re-thinking what IT *could* become for IT in the human services sector.
  - The Possibility Lab is a forward-looking forum for state, county, and nonprofit leaders to challenge the status quo and explore emerging ideas, theories, and future-state concepts for human services IT. This focus area is intentionally open and exploratory, welcoming early-stage thinking, conceptual models, and "what if" scenarios that are not yet ready for implementation.
  - Sessions may take the form of e-poster presentations, short talks, or facilitated open discussions in an open-format setting. The emphasis is on public-sector–driven ideas that reimagine service delivery, systems, and experiences, creating space to think beyond current constraints, legacy systems, and existing approaches.

APHSA welcomes proposals and presentations relevant to current topics and priorities across human services, with a particular emphasis on the following Program and Operational Areas:

Program Areas
Aging
Behavioral Health
Early Childhood and Child Care
Child Support
Child Welfare
Disability Services
Emergency Assistance and Preparation
Health
Housing
Medicaid
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Juvenile Justice
Tax Credits: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC)
Veteran's Services
Workforce Supports
Youth Development Programs

Operational Areas
Business Operations
Data/Evaluation
Design
Data/Evaluation
Innovation
IT
Policy
Product
Programs
Security/Privacy

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APHSA WELCOMES PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATIONS RELEVANT TO CURRENT TOPICS AND PRIORITIES ACROSS HUMAN SERVICES, WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Best practices and policy-enabled innovations across the wide spectrum of human services-related area: aging, adult services, child welfare, child care, child support, emergency preparedness, crisis response and resilience, early childhood, disability, housing, Medicaid, SNAP, TANF
- Human Services leadership development and agency workforce strategies for supporting recruitment and retention of staff, empowering a multigenerational workforce, promoting staff mental health and wellbeing, and building a culture of belonging.
- Collective action to advance belonging and outcomes in human services, such as by engaging people with lived experience in decision-making and implementing trauma-informed practices.
- Financing, procurement, and Advanced Planning Documents
- Topics related to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Tribal Social Services, Tribal TANF and SNAP, and other related topics which are unique to tribal nations and territories.
- Community-engagement strategies and effective approaches for elevating the voices of people with lived experience (such as people with disabilities, people who have experienced or interacted with the child welfare system, and others who have received some type of human services.)
- Interoperability opportunities within and across systems and jurisdictions; data sharing, privacy and security lessons
- Data analytics and evaluation, dashboards, and performance objectives to promote continuous improvement and accountability
- Groundbreaking technology projects, including use of AI and machine learning, human-centered designs, with emphasis on concrete application for agencies in completing their work, engaging more effectively with customers in providing information and/or services
- Promising cross-sector partnerships focused on alignment in Medicaid, housing, public health, education
- New or ground-breaking research with implications for the human services sector

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Submission Types

Session Type	Definition	Notes
Interactive Sessions *that will spark learning and engagement*	Following a short presentation, session will engage and interact with participants.	• Recommend having a designated facilitator for time tracking
Panel Presentation	A panel of no more than four speakers *including* a moderator.	• Excellent way to showcase success stories • Private sector presenters are strongly encouraged to have state or local client present with them
Roundtable Session	A small group discussion centered around a specific topic. It emphasizes equal participation and interaction among attendees, fostering in-depth conversations and idea exchange.	

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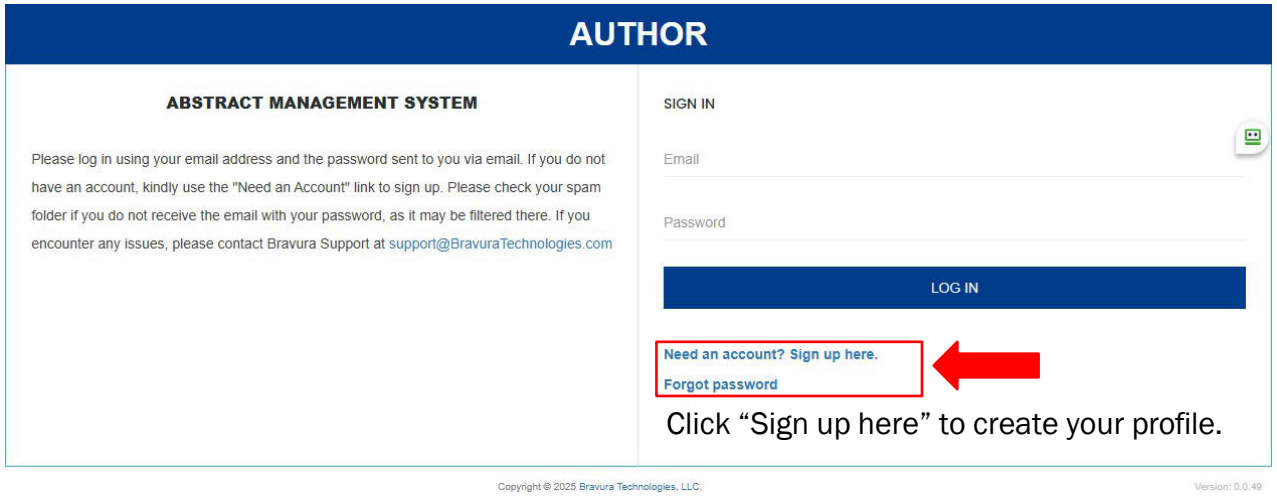
WHAT YOU NEED TO START YOUR INTERACTIVE SESSION OR PANEL PRESENTATION SUBMISSION

Gathering this information prior to starting each submission will be helpful

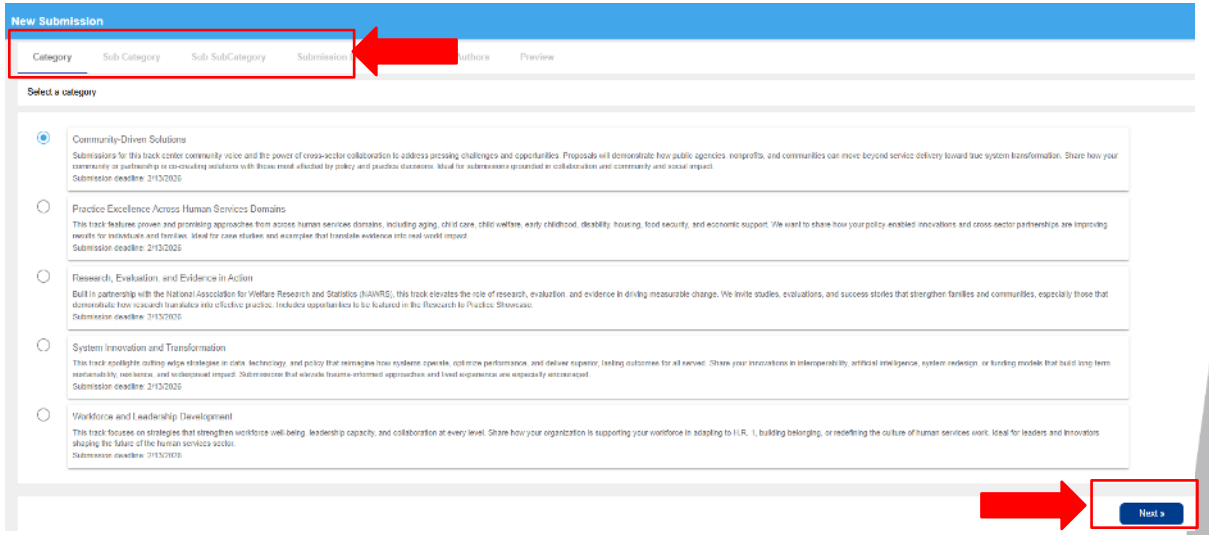
All fields marked with a red asterisk (*) are required

- Primary presenter's full name, title, organization, email, cell phone, photo, bio
- Co-presenter(s) full name, title, organization, email, cell phone, bio
- Session title – no more than 10 words, entered in title case
- Summary of your session – no more than 350 words
- APHSA will be offering continuing education units (CE) for approved sessions. All presenters will be required to upload a CV.
- Three (3) learning objectives (e.g., applied learning in an agency)
  - *What will an attendee take away that they can use immediately in their work?*
  - *What will an attendee be able to implement in their organization in the next 6 to 12 months?*
  - *How will the information presented in your session support an attendee in transforming their practice and/or agency?*

GETTING STARTED: USE *THIS LINK* TO ENTER THE SUMMIT CALL FOR PROPOSALS PORTAL



Click “Sign up here” to create your profile.



- You will receive an email including your username and password.
- Individual emails are required for each presenter.
- You cannot use the same email for all presenters.

- Follow each step to complete your proposal submission.
- Click “Next” to proceed to the next step.
- You will have the opportunity to return to the previous screen if you need to make any changes.

Once all required fields are completed, you will be able to complete your submission.

You can also save your work as a *DRAFT* and come back to edit, as needed, until **Monday, March 23, 2026.**

Questions or Need Assistance?

- Throughout the submission process, you will find a “Chat” button at the bottom right of the screen. This will connect you with technical support for the submission portal.
- Contact the Events Team at aphsaconferences@aphsa.org for questions on content, deadlines, required materials, etc. This email is being monitored by the team and can expect to receive a response within 48 hours (2 business days), Monday-Friday.
- You may also reach out directly to a member of the Events Team:
  - Donna Jarvis-Miller, djarvis-miller@aphsa.org
  - Maurine Jones, mcjones@aphsa.org
  - Marie Comito, mcomito@aphsa.org
- For information on registration, hotel reservations, and other important updates visit the ISM website.