



Proposal Information/Guide

Proposal Form

Our communities are stronger when everyone feels invested and works together. As anthropologist Margaret Mead famously said, *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* At its core, this is exactly what civic engagement represents: people coming together to enhance their community’s quality of life. Whether organizing volunteer efforts or encouraging voter participation, civically engaged communities play a vital role in shaping a stronger, more inclusive future.

On November 17, 2026, Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), in collaboration with the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), will host the 3rd Annual Civic and Community Engagement Summit in Detroit. This summit will bring together staff and volunteers of nonprofits, foundations and grassroots organizations across Michigan for shared learning and timely conversation on the importance of being community builders, the significance and impact of change-making work, and how to continue supporting a healthy democracy.

The summit aims to provide a space for participants committed to community and civic engagement to collaborate, build supportive relationships, and share information and resources.

Summit Theme:

Civic knowledge and understanding are foundational components of civic engagement.

Civic knowledge and understanding refers to an individual’s awareness and comprehension of how government, laws, and systems work, as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens within a society. This foundation is essential for empowering nonprofits and the communities they work alongside to participate in decision-making, advocating for needs, and contributing to local initiatives, making them critical to achieving mission-driven outcomes. When these skills are limited, barriers to participation increase, reducing access, inclusion, and impact.

With strong civic knowledge and understanding, nonprofits and foundations can take meaningful action to foster long-term change—building self-sufficiency, advancing equity, and strengthening communities.



Consider proposals that:

- Share strategies for proactively engaging with local leaders and organizations and how they can effectively share their nonprofit's story and the impacts decisions may have on their communities.
- Help organizations and leaders strategically assess how their civic and community engagement efforts can drive systemic change and develop intentional plans to achieve that impact.
- Provide tools and best/emerging practices that support understanding civic engagement structures and systems.
- Offer pathways to long-term empowerment of nonprofits and community members to advance their civic and community engagement efforts through educational, programmatic, and organizational approaches.

Session Style:

Present using the format that is most effective and engaging for the information you're sharing, whether it's a workshop, fireside chat, or panel. All session blocks will be 45 minutes, including any opportunities for Q&A and participant discussion.

Session Type:

Motivate / Inform: Sessions aim to educate attendees by providing insights and best/emerging practices, so they leave inspired and better prepared to enact their own civic engagement initiatives. Sample ideas:

- Getting started with community outreach.
- Effective strategies for launching civic initiatives.

Activate / Connect: Sessions focus on building cross-sector and/or cross-system partnerships for maximum impact. Sample ideas:

- Strengthening democracy through student-community partnerships.
- Partnering with local government to achieve policy changes.
- Bringing nonprofits together to educate new voters.

Evaluate: Sessions examine the impact of civic engagement efforts, exploring how to measure success and identify strategies that work. Sample ideas:

- Measuring the effectiveness of civic engagement programs.
- Evaluating successful community projects.
- Assessing the impact of civic engagement work on the systems and structures nonprofits work within.



Deadline for Submissions: August 14, 2026, 11:59PM EST

All session proposals will be reviewed by members of MNA and CMF. This process ensures that each proposal aligns with our event's goals and mission.

Those who submitted a session proposal will be notified of reviewer decisions no later than September 15, 2026.

Honoring Speakers' Time

Selected presenters will receive complimentary registration for the summit. Each selected topic proposal will receive a \$500 honorarium.

Equal Opportunities

It is the policy of this organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age, or disability.



Proposal Form Questions (*Required information)

Proposal Form

Presenter Information:

- First Name*
- Last Name*
- Pronouns
- Email Address*
- Organization*
- Title*
- Phone Number*
- Website URL*

Do you work or volunteer for a MNA or CMF member organization?*

Program Information:

- Session Title*
- Session Description (250 words or less)*
- Additional Presenters, if applicable (Please provide full name, pronouns, email, organization and title for each additional presenter)
- Please describe your background and expertise as related to your proposed session, as well as that of any co-presenters.
- What specific goals or learning outcomes do you want participants to achieve from your session? What will participants take away after attending your session in terms of knowledge, skills or resources?*
- Which session type best fits your session? (Please select one.)*
 - Motivate / Inform
 - Activate / Connect
 - Evaluate
 - Other
- What AV needs do you have for your presentation, please select all that apply: *
 - Projector and screen
 - Extra microphones
 - Audio hookup for a computer
 - Laptop/computer (provided by venue)
 - I will bring my own laptop/device
 - I will require an Apple adapter
 - Other
- By submitting this application, I affirm that the information set forth in it is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.*