



2021 AEP Virtual Gathering Call for Concurrent Session Proposals

DEADLINE: MAY 21, 2021

Introduction

AEP will accept concurrent session proposals through the [online submission form](#) for the 2021 AEP Virtual Gathering until May 21, 5 p.m. EDT. For questions or additional information, please contact [Mary Dell'Erba](#).

The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) and Education Commission of the States invite you to submit a proposal to share your work during a concurrent session at the 2021 Virtual Gathering, to be held on **September 14-15**. Concurrent sessions will assist leaders in gaining the knowledge and insights to ensure that all learners receive an excellent arts education. Arts education includes dance, folk arts, indigenous arts, media arts, visual arts, music and theatre and takes place in school and community settings.

About the AEP Virtual Gathering

Arts and education leaders from across the nation will convene virtually on Sept. 14-15 to explore solutions aimed at ensuring all learners receive a well-rounded education that includes the arts. The Virtual Gathering is a two-day online event that will feature keynote speakers, panel discussions, concurrent sessions and online networking opportunities. We believe that all art forms are important and all educators are important whether learning takes place in schools or out-of-school communities. The Virtual Gathering is a place to share the best of what's happening across the country in all learning spaces.

AEP's Commitment to Creating a Welcoming Event

AEP believes that everyone working in arts education has knowledge to share. We are actively trying to increase the visibility, accessibility and representation of those in the field, specifically populations historically and presently underrepresented, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; people with physical or mental disabilities; people with marginalized gender or sexual identities; and youth. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment where diverse voices are represented and honored, in service of the needs and diversity of learners who we all serve.

To support this commitment, AEP will prioritize sessions that include at least one speaker who has not previously presented at an AEP event and brings a diverse perspective to the field. In addition, AEP will provide pre-proposal informational sessions to provide support on elements of a strong proposal and formulating ideas to session objectives.

About the Audience

The Virtual Gathering's primary audience includes leaders from the arts, education, business, research, cultural, government and philanthropic sectors. AEP defines "leaders" broadly, from people who have leadership roles — in name and in practice — in arts and education spaces to people who share the priority that all learners receive a high-quality arts education. The following list offers examples of those who have attended other AEP gatherings:

- AEP and Education Commission of the States partners and affiliates
- Advocates and arts activists
- Business leaders
- Community leaders
- Educators, including certified classroom teachers, administrators, community artists, teaching artists, higher education faculty and members of arts and cultural institutions who facilitate arts learning
- Families and caregivers
- Higher education institutions
- Policymakers
- Private and public funders
- Researchers
- Service organizations

Priority Content Areas

AEP partners and affiliates identified the following areas as topics that are top of mind and most important to their work. While AEP will prioritize proposals that address these areas, we also encourage other sessions with additional areas of focus.

- **Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion** in arts education, specifically related to racial equity training, antiracist curriculum design, exploring shifts in institutional practices and power structures and overcoming barriers to providing all students with arts education.
- **Relationship building** across the arts and education fields, relevant to changes in federal, state and local leadership.
- Tactical **policy and systems change*** efforts to advance arts education.
- **Future-looking** conversations on what is next for arts education, building on what we have learned from remote, hybrid and in-person learning.
- The role of **technology** in arts learning.
- Trauma-informed arts education as a tool to support **healing and mental health**, specifically in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustice.

**AEP defines “systems change” as working to change institutions’ behavior, public attitudes, cultural norms, policy decisions and resource allocation to support equitable access to arts education for all learners, especially those who have historically been marginalized.*

Important Dates

- **April 7:** Request for Presentations Announced
- **May 21:** Deadline for Submission
- **June 4:** Concurrent Presenters Notified
- **June 7 - July 16:** Presentation Coaching and Planning Sessions
- **August 2 - 6:** Pre-Recorded Session Rehearsals*
- **August 9 - 13:** Pre-Recorded Sessions Recording

- **August 16 – 27:** Live Presenter Rehearsals*
- **September 3:** Final Deadline for Slides, One-Pagers and Supplemental Materials
- **September 14-15:** AEP Virtual Gathering

Please note that presenters must complete presentation preparation ahead of their scheduled session rehearsal, (August 2-13 or August 16-27**). In a virtual setting, AEP recognizes this shifts the bulk of the preparation time much earlier than an in-person setting.*

General Guidelines for Concurrent Sessions

- All presentations must have a designated **session organizer**. The session organizer is responsible for submitting the concurrent session form, coordinating with presenters, keeping AEP staff informed of any changes or challenges and meeting deadlines for submitting critical information.
- AEP will accept concurrent session proposals through the **online submission form only**. AEP will not accept proposals submitted in another format, including via email.
- **Listen/learn** sessions are pre-recorded and allotted **60 minutes**. These sessions focus on information sharing around a question or topic, and attendee engagement is limited to the chat function. **Engage/discuss** sessions are live and allotted **45 minutes**. These sessions focus on shared learning and engagement among attendees and speakers. Sessions should address **diverse learning styles**, and live sessions should provide opportunities for participants to actively engage in learning. Please indicate on your session proposal whether you are designing a listen/learn session or an engage/discuss session. The review panel may make recommendations on the session type during review, and AEP staff will support presenters if the review panel recommends changes to the proposed session.
- AEP will use a virtual event platform with similar – but not identical – capabilities as Zoom. We request that presenters brainstorm engagement strategies and meeting enhancements during the coaching sessions and communicate these in advance of the scheduled rehearsal. Engagement strategies may include polls, audio/video engagement from the audience, breakout sessions and use of collaboration tools such as **Google JamBoard, Padlet**, etc. AEP staff will work with presenters to identify strategies that are compatible with the platform capabilities.
- AEP will temporarily **loan video, audio and connection equipment upon request**. Presenters can send requests to **Mary Dell’Erba** up to two weeks before your scheduled rehearsal. AEP will provide technical support during the session recording or live event.
- Concurrent sessions are limited to **3 presenters**, including the session organizer. Reviewers will give preference to proposals that feature first-time presenters and those with all presenters confirmed at the time of submission or to proposals that indicate a willingness to collaborate with AEP staff to identify additional presenters.
- AEP will notify session organizers about their proposal’s status by **June 4**.

Speaker Requirements

- All presenters must be prepared to present on either day of the AEP Virtual Gathering (**September 14 and 15**) OR pre-record their session (**August 9-13**).
- All concurrent session presenters must register for the convening by **July 31**. There is no cost to attend the Virtual Gathering.
- Session hosts are invited to participate in coaching and planning sessions with AEP staff and consultants between **June 7-July 12**. These sessions will focus on creating presentations that are inclusive and engaging and that meet the event’s desired outcomes. These sessions will also offer an opportunity to assess any technology needs.

- Session organizers are required to submit a one-page summary handout of their presentation **at the time of their scheduled rehearsal**. AEP staff will provide a template that includes the names, titles and organizations of presenters; the title, description and outline of the session; learning objectives and a list of any supplemental materials provided or referenced. This information is necessary to accommodate different learning styles, document the session for future reference and ensure presentation content matches the submitted proposal.
- The rehearsal is your opportunity to practice your presentation and receive feedback, and it is AEP’s opportunity to ensure we are prepared to support you. **Presenters are required to have a fully developed session and be prepared to practice by the scheduled rehearsal date**. While minor changes between the rehearsal and presentation are to be expected, please come prepared with any slides, materials, media and talking points developed. Rehearsals will take place between August 2-6 for asynchronous sessions and August 16-27 for synchronous sessions.
- **Session organizers must share all final slides and supplemental materials with AEP staff no later than Friday, September 3**. This step is necessary to ensure that AEP staff members can review slides and pre-load materials to the event platform. Education Commission of the States and AEP are nonpartisan organizations committed to fair representation in all materials. AEP will ask all presenters to review their session materials for messages that may be perceived as biased or discriminatory. AEP staff members may engage presenters in a conversation if materials contain questionable content, and AEP reserves the right to cancel a session if presenters are unwilling to make changes.
- Session presenters grant permission for AEP to distribute their supplemental resource materials on the AEP website and conference app. If presenters wish to distribute copyrighted information in supplemental materials, it is their responsibility to obtain necessary permissions. Such materials will be distributed only if the presenters submit them with the publisher’s written permission attached. AEP will consider proposals highlighting research in progress, as well as research that is not publicly available on a case-by-case basis.

Proposal Evaluation and Selection

AEP and Education Commission of the States staff will review all proposals and select the concurrent sessions for the final Virtual Gathering program. In addition to prioritizing an inclusive agenda that will better serve our attendees and respond to the needs and diversity of learners we all ultimately serve, AEP will make session proposal selections that are informed by the following criteria:

Minimum Requirements	Priority Preference
Learning objectives that align to the session content and prepare participants to apply what they learn to their own work or contexts.	Objectives that include verbs such as “design,” “evaluate,” “create,” “compare,” “connect” or “interpret.”
Sessions with a focus on actionable learning and proposals with a clear explanation about what will occur during the proposed session. Engage/discuss sessions focus on shared learning and attendee engagement. Listen/learn sessions focus on answering a topical question.	For engage/discuss sessions: Specific strategies identified for participants to contribute their own expertise and insight to the conversation. For listen/learn sessions: A clear outcome identified for what the presenter hopes attendees will do differently based on the information shared.

Minimum Requirements	Priority Preference
At least one session host confirmed with passion or experience to share on the topic and a willingness to work with AEP to identify collaborators.	At least one speaker who has not presented at a previous event.
Session topics that are topical and relevant.	Session topics that align with priority content areas and build on, challenge or bring new perspective to dominant narratives.
Evidence that planner(s) have eliminated barriers to participation so that every participant can be successful and learn.	Planner(s) have offered specific examples of inclusive practices and how they plan to make those practices integral to the learning experience.
A focus on systems change or building individual leadership capacity.	Connections made to how the attendee can implement new learning immediately and in the long term.
Youth focused.	Engagement or participation with youth directly.

About AEP and Education Commission of the States

The Arts Education Partnership at Education Commission of the States is a national network of education, arts, business, cultural, government and philanthropic organizations dedicated to advancing arts in education. The Arts Education Partnership has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education since 1995 and is administered by Education Commission of the States.

AEP is the nation’s hub for arts and education leaders, building their leadership capacity to support students, educators and learning environments. Through research, reports, convenings and counsel, leaders gain knowledge and insights to ensure that all learners receive an excellent arts education.