

WE LOCAL US 2025: CALL FOR PARTICIPATION (CFP) for BREAKOUT SESSIONS GUIDELINES

In Spring 2025, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) will offer three WE Local conferences in the United States: San Jose, CA; Cherry Hill, NJ; and Milwaukee, WI. We at SWE are committed to making these U.S. WE Local events – like all our programming – a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment for all participants. Our goals in this **Call for Participation (CFP) for Breakout Sessions (Lectures, Panels, Snap Sessions, and Workshops)** are: to ensure effective programming and speaking opportunities are provided, and to empower attendees to succeed at every stage of their professional development.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR ALL U.S. WE LOCAL EVENTS

- CFP Opens: **August 19, 2024**
- CFP Closes: **September 30, 2024**
- Speaker Notifications: **November 27, 2024**
- Speaker Acceptance Due: **December 16, 2024**
- Speaker Updates Due: **Two weeks before your WE Local event** (to Cadmium ONLY)
- PowerPoint Upload Due: **Two weeks before your WE Local event** (to Cadmium ONLY, following template to be provided)
- **WE Local, San Jose, CA: February 28 - March 1, 2025**
- **WE Local, Cherry Hill, NJ: March 7-8, 2025**
- **WE Local, Milwaukee, WI: March 14-15, 2025**

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SCORING RUBRIC

Sessions submitted to the US WE Local Call for Participation (CFP) are scored as follows:

SCORING RUBRIC	
TITLE – CONCISE & INTRIGUING	5 POINTS
DESCRIPTION – FOCUSED & CONCISE	5 POINTS
DESCRIPTION – RELEVANT & INTERESTING	5 POINTS
LEARNING OUTCOMES	5 POINTS
SPEAKER QUALIFICATIONS	5 POINTS
OVERALL CLARITY	3 POINTS
UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE	3 POINTS
RELEVANT TO SWE'S MISSION	3 POINTS
OVERALL RECOMMENDATION	5 POINTS
TOTAL	39 POINTS

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- **PREPARE YOUR SUBMISSION IN ADVANCE** – Read this guide in its entirety and collect all your session information and speaker information before beginning the submission process.
- **AVOID THE NUMBER ONE COMPLAINT** – The number one complaint from session attendees is that session content does not match the description and learning outcomes. Therefore, take time to finalize session content before submitting your proposal.
- **SWE PRIORITIZES DIVERSITY** – We encourage participation by speakers from backgrounds that are underrepresented in engineering and technology.
- **SEEKING INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED TOPICS** - SWE is actively looking for and encourages you to submit intermediate and advanced level content.
- **MERGE SESSIONS** - It is common for SWE to receive multiple proposals on the same topic, so be sure your session has a unique perspective. If not, speakers may be asked to merge their session with another session with the same topic.
- **SUBMIT SESSION IN FINAL STATE** - Changes cannot be made once the CFP closes.
- **BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE** - Use [bias-free language](#) as articulated by the American Psychological Association; See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association style, 7th edition, Chapter 5 for tips about how to reduce bias.
- **GET FEEDBACK** - Ask an experienced colleague to preview your proposal for clarity, concision, and interest.
- **PRESENTER LIMITS** - To provide a diverse exposure to speakers, a speaker will only be selected for one session (panel discussions may present special cases).
- **NO SALES PITCHES** - Proposals are more likely to be selected if they do not include organization names because it flags the session as a “sales pitch.” In general SWE does not accept sessions that are too heavily company-promotional.

HOW TO SUBMIT A BREAKOUT SESSION PROPOSAL FOR WE LOCAL US 2025

- ❖ Access the [online Cadmium submission portal](#) to submit your session proposal. The sections and questions below closely mirror the application content within Cadmium.
- ❖ **NEED HELP?** For a Cadmium submission walkthrough, view the [short tutorial video](#) (from WE24 but also applicable for WE Local US 2025). For tips on how to craft effective session descriptions and learning outcomes, take the [short micro-learning course](#).
- ❖ **CFP submission deadline = Monday, September 30, 2024, 11:59pm US ET.**

Questions with an asterisk (*) are required

BASIC INFO (from Cadmium Dashboard, click “Click here to begin a new proposal.”)

1. * **TITLE** (5 point) – The title is evaluated on being concise and capturing interest (limit to 10 words).
2. * **FORMAT** (0 points) - Select the most appropriate session format to achieve the learning outcomes.
 - **LISTEN & LEARN LECTURE** (30-minute lecture plus 15-minute audience Q&A): Lectures are the standard conference session type where subject-matter experts present to attendees with minimal on-stage group discussions. **Must have minimum 1 and maximum 2 speakers.**
 - **ENGAGED EXCHANGE PANEL** (45-minute panel discussion + 15-minute audience Q&A): This format is ideal for panel discussions. Panels provide opportunities to learn from multiple subject-matter experts. **Must have 1 moderator + 2-4 speakers, i.e., 3-5 presenters total.**
 - **SNAP SESSION** (15-minute presentation plus 5-minute audience Q&A): Snap Sessions are short, thought-provoking, and laser-focused on a specific topic. SWE typically schedules 2-3 snap sessions in a row, arranged according to themes. **Must have minimum 1 and maximum 2 speakers.**
 - **WORKSHOP** (60-minute workshop): **NEW!** Workshops provide a substantially more interactive, hands-on experience than Lectures, Panels, or Snap Sessions. A VERY limited number of Workshop slots are available as we refine this new session format being offered for the first time at WE Local US 2025. **Must have minimum 1 and maximum 2 presenters.**

SESSION SPECIFICATIONS Task

1. * **WE LOCAL EVENT** (0 points) - Which WE Local US event(s) are you applying to? Select all that apply. If your session is selected, it will be **selected for only one WE Local event**. Please note that **SWE does not reimburse travel expenses nor offer any stipends** or speaker fees for CFP sessions.
 - WE Local in San Jose, California, February 28 - March 1, 2025
 - WE Local in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, March 7-8, 2025
 - WE Local in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 14-15, 2025
2. * **TRACK** (0 points) - Select the track that most closely relates to the subject matter of your session.
 1. **CAREER DEVELOPMENT:** This track examines tools and best practices to assist in managing and advancing careers in engineering and technology. Examples include:
 - Resume and interview best practices and salary negotiations.
 - Techniques to manage professional transitions.

- Techniques for creating and maintaining successful professional relationships.
 - 2. **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING (DEIB):** Based on SWE’s vision of a world with gender parity and equality in engineering and technology, topics within this track focus on removing barriers, biases, and obstacles within the profession and promoting inclusive environments. Examples of topics include:
 - Tools to be inclusive leaders and team members. Techniques to build and promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Approaches for global diversity practices.
 - Leveraging intersectionality in the workplace.
 - 3. **TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS:** This track evaluates new trends in engineering technology, including disruptive technologies. Sessions in this track are given by technical experts. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Additive Manufacturing & 3D Printing
 - Cloud Computing
 - Energy Transition & Sustainability
 - 4. **SELF-MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP:** This track addresses topics to improve and grow personally as well as how leaders shape the performance and success of their organizations. Participants will develop new skills and hone existing skills that will prepare them to be more effective leaders. Examples of topics include:
 - Best practices for developing and maintaining wellness strategies.
 - Self-reflection and assessment techniques to recognize strengths and opportunities for improvements, seeking feedback from others, and learning from failure.
 - Techniques to develop a greater capacity to grow and support people and teams.
 - Recognizing the importance of mentoring and sponsorship.
 - Approaches to effectively influence others and build alliances.
3. * **LEARNING LEVEL** (0 points) - Select the learning level most appropriate for your session based on your level of experience with the content.
- 1. **FOUNDATIONAL:** appropriate for those with limited experience (0-2 years) with the subject matter and often introduces subject matter; content focuses on awareness and factual recall.
 - 2. **INTERMEDIATE:** builds on existing knowledge, appropriate for those seeking to expand upon existing knowledge or experiences. Appropriate for audiences with 3-9 years of experience.
 - 3. **ADVANCED:** for those with nearly ten years of experience applying foundational and intermediate concepts and looking to implement new content and programs. Advanced level content is often appropriate for audiences with 10-20 years of experience.
4. * **SESSION PRESENTED BEFORE** (0 points) - Have you (i.e., you personally, and/or a speaker lineup mostly similar to the speaker lineup you are submitting here) presented this session (i.e., this precise session, and/or a session mostly similar to it) at any previous WE Local or WE Annual events? Select all that apply.
- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ WE24 | ▪ WE22 | ▪ WE20 |
| ▪ WE Local 24 | ▪ WE Local 22 | ▪ WE Local 20 |
| ▪ WE23 | ▪ WE21 | ▪ I/we have NOT presented this/similar session at prior WE conferences |
| ▪ WE Local 23 | ▪ WE Local 21 | |

5. * **SCHEDULE CONFLICTS** (0 points) – Please enter any times when the speaker(s) are **NOT** available to present this session. **All schedule requests are due at the time of submission.** SWE does not guarantee that we will be able to accommodate new schedule requests apart from those submitted here.
- Speaker(s) **NOT** available Friday AM
 - Speaker(s) **NOT** available Friday PM
 - Speaker(s) **NOT** available Saturday AM
 - Speaker(s) **NOT** available Saturday PM
 - Speaker(s) available at all times
6. * **FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** (0 points) – I understand that SWE does not provide any stipends to Breakout Session Speakers, nor any funding to support Breakout Session Speakers’ travel, lodging, and expenses. I understand that if my session is selected for presentation at WE Local US 2025, I and any co-speakers, if applicable, will be responsible for funding our own travel, lodging, and other expenses. SWE does, however, provide Breakout Session Speakers a discount code for their conference registration.
- I agree.

SESSION DESCRIPTION Task

1. * **DESCRIPTION** (10 points) – In 150 words or less, describe: (1) What the topic is and why it’s important; (2) What is the purpose of the session; and (3) What will be included in the session. Remember that not everyone works in the same industry. Do not assume that the reader is familiar with all technical terms, acronyms, etc. The session description is evaluated based on:
- (5 points) Being focused and concise (limit to 150 words)
 - (5 points) Being relevant and interesting

LEARNING OUTCOMES Task

- 1-3.* **LEARNING OUTCOMES** (5 points) - Learning outcomes are measurable statements that describe what **attendees** should be able to do after attending your session. Each session is evaluated based on the learning outcomes being **clearly stated and achievable with instruction**.

Each learning outcome should start with an imperative verb (e.g., “**Define** clean hydrogen,” “**Explain** the common pitfalls of imposter syndrome,” etc). Refer to the table below for examples of suitable verbs to begin each learning outcome.

Listen & Learn Lectures, Engaged Exchange Panels, and Workshops require 3 Learning Outcomes. Snap Sessions must submit minimum 2 and maximum 3 learning outcomes.

Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs											
KNOWLEDGE		COMPREHENSION		APPLICATION		ANALYSIS		SYNTHESIS		EVALUATION	
Define	List	Classify	Explain	Apply	Modify	Analyze	Compare	Categorize	Develop	Assess	Evaluate
Describe	Name	Describe	Express	Change	Practice	Appraise	Contrast	Compose	Devise	Compare	Interpret
Duplicate	Outline	Discuss	Predict	Demonstrate	Prepare	Calculate	Examine	Create	Plan	Conclude	Relate
Identify	Recognize	Estimate	Review	Illustrate	Solve	Categorize	Outline	Design	Summarize	Contrast	Predict

SESSION-SPECIFIC SPEAKER BIOS Task

- 1-5. * **SPEAKER BIOS** (5 points) - For each presenter on this session, enter a bio (maximum 150 words) illustrating their **qualifications to present on this topic**. Bios should be written in third person, using complete sentences, e.g., "Jane Doe is CEO of Such N Such Company. She has 20 years of experience on..." **NOTE:** Reviewers will view these bio(s), so be sure these bio(s) demonstrate presenter qualifications on this particular session topic.

For an example of conference-appropriate bios, please refer to the [WE23 Keynote Speaker Bios](#). Remember that Breakout Session Speaker Bios are limited to 150 words maximum.

If you are submitting multiple sessions on different topics, you should submit a tailored, topic-specific bio for each session. If your session is selected for presentation at WE Local US 2025, you will have the option later to refine your speaker bio. In the unlikely event that you have multiple sessions selected for presentation at WE Local US 2025, you will be asked to provide one single speaker bio for inclusion in the conference program.

VIDEO (optional): Use EITHER the FILE UPLOAD Task -OR- the LINK INPUT Task

1. **VIDEO** (0 points) - Submit a video (maximum 90 seconds) illustrating the session topic and demonstrating the public speaking expertise of the speaker(s). This may be a new video pitch, or a video excerpt from a past speaking event. You may submit a video file (max. 90 seconds), a streaming link to a video (max. 90 seconds), or neither.

To submit a video file:	To submit a streaming link to a video:	To submit neither:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click into the VIDEO - FILE UPLOAD task. Upload your 90-second video file. Click Continue to complete the task. Click into the VIDEO - LINK INPUT task. Leave the text entry field blank, then click Continue to complete the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click into the VIDEO - FILE UPLOAD task. Check the box marked "Opt out of uploading files," then click Continue to complete the task. Click into the VIDEO- LINK INPUT task. Enter your video link in the text entry field, then click Continue to complete the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click into the VIDEO - FILE UPLOAD task. Check the box marked "Opt out of uploading files." Click Continue to complete the task. Click into the VIDEO - LINK INPUT task. Leave the text entry field blank, then click Continue to complete the task.

SPEAKER INFORMATION

1. * **SPEAKER INFORMATION** (0 points) - For each presenter, submit the required information listed below. The submitter may either enter info for all speakers, or may enter speakers' emails and send them each a personalized login link where they can enter their own info.

Listen & Learn Lectures, Snap Sessions, and Workshops must have 1-2 Speakers

Engaged Exchange Panels must have 1 Moderator + 2-4 Speakers, i.e. 3-5 Presenters total

All sessions may *optionally* enter 1-5 Auxiliary Contacts, who are extra persons/email addresses who will be notified whether this session is accepted for presentation at WE Local US 2025. **NOTE:** Submitters are not automatically notified. If you are a Submitter but not a Presenter, and you wish to be notified whether this session is accepted, you must add yourself here as an Auxiliary Contact. Regardless of role, **all persons listed in this Task will be notified whether this session is accepted** for presentation at WE Local US 2025. However, Auxiliary Contacts will not necessarily be kept in the loop about subsequent logistical steps such as the Session Agreement Form, etc – steps which are primarily the responsibility of Presenters themselves.

IMPORTANT: The first person listed in this Task functions as Team Lead. If this session is accepted for presentation at WE Local US 2025, the Team Lead is the one who will need to complete the Session Agreement

Form to accept or decline the invitation to present this session. In other words, the Team Lead should be a responsible email-checker, and most likely an active Presenter, not an Auxiliary Contact. Once you have entered your Presenters/Contacts below, use the up/down arrows on the right to rearrange them and ensure the person you want to act as Team Lead is listed first.

- a. First and last name
- b. Email address
- c. Role in this Session: Speaker / Moderator [Panels only] / Auxiliary Contact
- d. Phone number
- e. City and country
- f. Title/position
- g. Company/organization
- h. Gender (includes Prefer Not To Answer option)
- i. Racial or cultural group (includes Prefer Not To Answer option)
- j. Member of the LGBTQ+ community? (include Prefer Not To Answer option)
- k. Years of experience on session topic: 1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 20+
- l. Public speaking level: Novice / Advanced Beginner / Competent / Proficient / Expert
- m. Any accessibility requirements?
- n. Is this speaker a SWE Member?
- o. Is this speaker a member of any SWE Affinity Groups? Check all that apply.
- p. Bio - **NOTE:** This may be different from the Session-Specific Bio you submitted above. This is the bio that will be published if your session is accepted, so it should be a generalized professional bio. Reviewers will not see this bio nor any of your personal info submitted in this Speaker Information Task.

FINALIZE YOUR SUBMISSION using the **SUBMIT** button!

VERY IMPORTANT! To submit your session, be sure to click **SUBMIT**. Merely clicking SAVE will freeze the submission in "Active" or Incomplete status, meaning it will not be reviewed and will not be eligible for presentation at WE Local US 2025. Avoid disappointment by ensuring that you click **SUBMIT** in order to fully finalize your submission.

How do I know the submission went through? Immediately after submission, you as submitter will receive a confirmation email, and the system should invite you to enter optional feedback on your submission experience via a blue, handwritten-style graphic on the upper right. And, at any time after submitting, you will be able to see the submitted proposal in your Dashboard, under the PROPOSALS section, showing "Status: Complete (Submitted mm/dd/yyyy, hh:mm)."

OPTIONAL EDITS + HOW TO WITHDRAW A PROPOSAL

It is possible to edit in-progress or submitted sessions any time up until the submission deadline. While logged in to Cadmium, click into your existing proposal submission. Near the top, there is a bar that says Home / Proposal / Task List.

- Click Proposal to **edit** your Title or Session Type (Lecture / Panel / Snap / Workshop).
- Click Task List to **edit** any of your session content.
- Click Proposal, then in the Proposal Status Dropdown menu, select Withdrawn, and finally click the Update Proposal button, in order to **withdraw** your session.

SPEAKER NOTICE & FAQs

NOTICE FOR ALL SPEAKERS

- All WE Local Breakout Session Presenters are volunteers who provide their time and expertise at no cost to SWE. Accepted Breakout Session Presenters will be provided a discount code for conference registration.
- For any general questions about the WE Local conferences, contact SWE at welocal@swe.org. For any specific questions about the WE Local US 2025 CFP, contact cfp@swe.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Can I submit more than one proposal?**

You may submit multiple proposals on different topics. To provide opportunities to as many speakers as possible, SWE tends not to accept more than one session per person. But submitting multiple proposals on distinct topics may increase your chances of being selected.

2. **Can I submit identical or similar proposals under different tracks?**

No. Submitters must identify the one single track which best fits their session content. Please **refrain** from submitting similar topics on multiple paths (e.g., a similar “imposter syndrome” session as both a Track 1 Lecture and a Track 4 Snap Session). Only in very rare cases do the review and selection processes recommend a different track for a particular session. If one submitter submits identical or substantially similar sessions to multiple tracks, these submissions will not be considered.

3. **Does WE Local accept speakers who do not identify as women?**

Yes. We accept submissions from all gender identities and encourage submissions from groups that are underrepresented in engineering and technology.

4. **Do speakers need to be SWE members?**

Speakers do not need to be SWE members to submit a proposal or speak at the conference.

5. **How do I participate in the Poster Competition?**

The Poster Competition is entirely separate from the CFP Breakout Session process. Visit welocal.swe.org or contact us at welocal@swe.org to learn more about the Poster Competition.

6. **How do I submit a keynote presentation proposal?**

Keynote speaker selection is entirely separate from the CFP Breakout Session process, and usually occurs at least one year before the conference. Please visit welocal.swe.org to learn more about the keynote speaker nomination process.

7. **Does SWE offer an honorarium to CFP Breakout Session presenters?**

No. Presenters selected through the CFP submission process must self-fund their travel, lodging, and all other expenses. SWE does not reimburse costs or offer any stipends or speaker fees. However SWE does provide a discount code to all speakers selected through the WE Local CFP, which allows discounted registration for their WE Local conference.