



AHEPPP
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

conference
PROPOSAL GUIDE

PREPARED BY
NINA LUXON &
ANJIE CHANG

PALM SPRINGS, CA
NOVEMBER 16-18
2026 CONFERENCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 Overview of Process

4 Conference Priorities & Focus Areas

5 Rubric

6 What does the proposal ask?

7 Guide to Flash-Talks

8 Tips & Tricks

9 Examples

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

1

DEFINE YOUR TOPIC

Think about a program, service, or initiative you provide to families that other institutions may be interested in, especially something that aligns with current challenges, innovations, or priority topics in parent and family engagement.

2

FIND SUPPORT

Consider co-presenting with a colleague, teammate, or campus partner to enhance your proposal.

3

WRITE & SUBMIT PROPOSAL

Look at the “tips and tricks” section for best practices related to writing your conference proposal. Also, don’t forget to tie your proposal to best practices or literature.

4

PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE

If accepted, start creating your presentation, confirming funding for the conference, and developing a timeline for yourself with important due dates.

5

NEXT STEPS

Presenters will receive detailed information for what is needed and what to expect. If you have any questions, please reach out to your programming committee members!

CONFERENCE PRIORITIES & FOCUS AREAS

MISSION

To support professionals in higher education who promote student success through informed parent and family engagement.

CONFERENCE FOCUS

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications & Accessibility Tools
- Data-Informed Family Engagement Practices & Assessment Tools
- Fundraising Fundamentals & Campus Partnerships
- Experienced Leader Advancement & Skill Building
- Advocating for Intentional Parent & Family Engagement

We welcome proposals on any topic within of Higher Education, and Parent & Family Programs, although these may be of certain interest to our attendees this year based on survey results.

For a strong proposal, connect your topic to AHEPPP's mission and at least one conference focus area. Demonstrate how your work addresses current needs or emerging practices in the field."

RUBRIC FOR REVIEWERS

Here is the rubric used by program reviewers. Feel free to utilize it while crafting your proposal. All submissions, with university or presenter identifying information redacted, undergo evaluation by a minimum of two reviewers

| Category | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Relevance to Conference Priorities | Clearly aligns with one or more conference focus areas and addresses a timely or significant issue in the field. | Generally aligns with a conference focus area; relevance is evident but may lack depth. | Limited or unclear alignment with conference priorities. | No clear alignment with conference priorities. |
| Proposal addressed how the presentation will meet purpose/learning outcomes. | Exceptionally well-organized and connects back to audience learning outcomes. | Generally coherent organization, minor lapses in structure. Semi connects to audience learning outcomes. | Lack of consistent structure, unclear learning outcomes. | Disorganized and no defined learning outcomes. |
| Inclusion of assessment data or connection to literature when relevant. | Excellent use of best practices, theory, or data. | Generally appropriate use of best practices, theory, or data. | Limited or inconsistent use of best practices, theory, or data. | No use of best practices, theory, or data. |
| Intentionally addresses how information can be applied to other institution(s) | Provides a clear understanding of how content can be applied to other institutions. | Some consideration of application to other institutions, minor gaps in addressing needs. | Limited awareness of connection to other institutions, content not well-adapted. | No consideration of connection to other institutions, content irrelevant or confusing. |
| Proposal demonstrates participant engagement | Clearly demonstrates how participants will engage with the educational program. | Somewhat demonstrates how participants will engage with the educational program. | Vaguely demonstrates participant engagement. | No mention of how the educational program will engage participants. |



Other considerations:

Are you partnering with another institution or university department outside of parent and family programs? What is your target audience for your presentation and is your audience being reached? Does the title of your proposal match the description?

WHAT INFORMATION DOES THE PROPOSAL ASK?

Who are the presenter(s) of the educational program?

Before submitting, you will need who you are presenting with and general information about them (i.e. names, pronouns, professional title, institution, email, etc.)

“Which conference focus area(s) and key issues does your educational program address?”

Refer to the information on page 4 for conference priorities.

What is your educational program’s title and audience?

Be sure that your title and your intended audience align with your abstract and educational program description.

What do you need?

Abstract (75 word max): Short, attractive description of your educational program. Think of it as your elevator pitch!

Description (400 word max): A more detailed description for reviewers to have a better understanding of your educational program.

Outline (400 word max): Timeline, structure, and game plan for educational program (don’t forget audience participation!)

Program Format: Be sure to pick a program format conducive to your topic.

Other considerations:

Would you be willing to have a co-presenter added that had a similar proposal?
Would you want to host your educational program as a webinar post-conference hosted by AHEPPP?



GUIDE TO FLASH-TALKS

Who are we looking for?

Inspired by TED Talks, we are seeking Parent & Family Engagement professionals who are willing to share their journey in higher education, and how that journey led you to parent and family programs.

What should your story include?

Your Flash-Talk should highlight these key points:

- What first drew you to higher education and/or parent & family engagement?
- Key moments, challenges, or turning points along your journey?
- How this work has shaped you personally and professionally?
- What you hope to inspire others in our field to think about, try, or become?

Why your voice matters?

Because our stories matter. By sharing our journeys, we strengthen our professional community, learn from one another's experiences, and remind ourselves why this work is meaningful. Your story could be the spark that encourages someone else to lead boldly, innovate creatively, or stay committed during challenging moments.

What do you need?

Description (400 word max): Share your story to help reviewers understand the focus, purpose, and overall impact of your Flash Talk.

Outline (400 word max): Explain the flow of your 30-minute Flash Talk, include key moments, transitions, reflection points, and how you'll engage the audience.

Key Takeaways (3-4 bullet points): What do you hope attendees walk away with? Inspiration, a new mindset, a practical strategy, renewed purpose?

Visuals (10 slides max): Pictures help immerse your audience! We encourage you to use any pictures, visuals, or elements to tell your story.

TIPS AND TRICKS



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Start with a brainstorming session</p> | <p>Get Organized</p> | |
| <p>Before starting to write your proposal, start with a brainstorming session to define your outcomes. Think through:</p> <p><i>What are your goals?</i> <i>Why do you want to share this content?</i> <i>What are the key takeaways?</i> <i>Who are potential partners?</i></p> | <p>It may be helpful to create a shared online document for writing down your thoughts, time plan, and proposal.</p> <p>If you have co-presenters, this is crucial for you to have a shared workspace to add your thoughts and ideas.</p> | |
| <p>Think through the applicability of your content</p> | | <p>Engage with your audience: Even asking for a quick response or time to think, pair, share can go a long way!</p> |
| <p>When creating your proposal, think about what you hope to gain from attending AHEPPP educational sessions and ensure your presentation reflects those goals. Most folks are hoping to gain new, tangible ideas they can implement at their own institutions.</p> | | |
| <p>Nervous to present? We've got you! Reach out to an AHEPPP colleague to practice and ensure you are confident for your educational program!</p> | <p>Find ways to show how your educational program is applicable beyond parent and family orientation/programming.</p> <p>Some who attend AHEPPP are in other functional areas - think through how you can expand your idea in other areas (i.e. development, case management, residence life, etc.)</p> | <p>Go Beyond Your Office</p> |
| <p>Start Early</p> | | <p>Note: if accepted, you'll be required to submit your presentation in advance.</p> <p>Be sure to keep track of important to-dos and the timeline so you don't get behind!</p> |
| <p>Don't wait until the last minute. Allocate ample time for both crafting and revisiting your proposal before submission!</p> | | |

EXAMPLE

Title of Program : Engagement of families through their student's time in college

Educational Program Type:

Lecture Roundtable Panel Other (explain)

Educational Program Abstract (75 words):

Higher education professionals continually adapt to the changing needs of students and ways to prepare, communicate, and engage family members. We must prepare to engage our families through multiple methods, including social media, emails, webinars, or in-person programs. We will dive into how two institutions developed a framework of support for parents and families of college students.

Educational Program Description:

Higher education professionals continually adapt to the changing needs of students and ways to prepare, communicate, and engage family members along the lifecycle of the student experience. Communication and engagement between a family member and the institution have evolved, information moves quicker, and demands are high.

As professionals, we must prepare to engage our families through multiple methods, including social media, emails, webinars, or in-person programs. This presentation will dive into how two institutions developed and implemented a framework for families at multiple stages of their student's experience.

Additionally, we'll discuss collaboration with campus partners and including them in developing and delivering information. Finally, utilizing best practices and assessment results, we'll examine various family engagement opportunities, including webinars, newsletters, social media, in-person events, and publications. From pre-orientation to graduation, family programs professionals will leave with tangible concepts to enhance family engagement based on the lifecycle of a student.

By participating in this educational program, participants will:

- Explore the ways families of GenZ students want to be engaged with.
- Learn how to develop, implement, and assess family engagement plans that follow the lifecycle of a student.
- Examine how their institution can develop collaborative opportunities to engage campus partners in serving families.

Outline:

- Introduction to the topic (Audience: what are your current challenges in working with and communicating to your students' family members?) - 5 mins
- Institutional context - 5 mins
- Demographics of parents/family members of current students - 1 min
- How current family members desire to engage with institutions - 1 min
- Ways our institutions engage family members - 20 mins
- Methods for communication & Timeline of communication (i.e. Matching the lifecycle of the student) - 5 mins
- Assessing your communication (Formal vs. informal methods of assessment) - 5 mins
- Audience engagement - 8 mins
 - What strategies have you found successful in communicating with and serving parents/family members?
 - Beyond Orientation, what are successful practices at your institution?
 - What are two ideas you plan to take from this and implement in the next 6 months?

Target Audience:

- 1-3 Years in Family Programming
- 4-8 Years in Family Programming
- 9-12 Years in Family Programming
- 12+ Years in Family Programming
- Event Programming
- Orientation/Transitions Programs
- Development/Advancement Officer
- Mental Health Professionals or Case Managers
- Communication & Marketing
- Residence Life
- Admissions

Other (please explain):

Conference Priority Topics:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications & Accessibility Tools
- Data-Informed Family Engagement Practices & Assessment Tools
- Fundraising Fundamentals & Campus Partnerships
- Emerging challenges or trends
- Continued professional development
- Family engagement strategies
- Experienced Leader Advancement & Skill Building
- Advocating for Intentional Parent & Family Engagement

Other (please explain):

Other (please explain):