



Call for Proposals (CFP) Guide

OVERVIEW

About the NVFC Training Summit

The NVFC launched its first Training Summit in 2014 to provide a unique, intimate learning experience for volunteers. The conference is an opportunity for emergency responders from across the U.S. to participate in valuable classroom training and share ideas and best practices with peers and industry leaders. Through general sessions, keynote presentations, and breakout sessions, the event addresses key topics in first responder health, safety, leadership, recruitment, and retention. To deliver this learning experience, the NVFC seeks educational proposals that will advance the industry. Proposals should:

- Be developed by the proposed instructor, or be delivered by an authorized representative of the course developer.
- Explore timely and relevant topics important to emergency response organizations that are diverse in size, geographic location, funding sources, and staffing structure.
- Be informed by sound learning principles, including well-defined learning objectives (*see Appendix A for information on writing learning objectives*).
- Demonstrate innovative strategies.
- Challenge attendees to think of new solutions and leave with clear action items.
- Support and reference National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards when applicable, and support instructional claims with research and/or data.
- Facilitate knowledge transfer and development of new competencies.
- Stimulate and provoke discussion, reflection, and audience engagement.
- Follow the NVFC's established guidance for AI use (please see Appendix B)

About the Proposal Review and Session Selection Process

The NVFC works to be inclusive when reviewing session proposals. We solicit proposals nationwide from a variety of voices and viewpoints to ensure conference content is timely, relevant, and targeted to attendee needs. We know many great ideas are being shared at the local, regional, and state levels. We encourage those new to instructing at a national level to apply! Many well-known national fire service instructors got their start at an NVFC conference. All complete proposals are evaluated by staff and a volunteer review committee comprised of NVFC stakeholders nationwide.

Important Dates

- Call for Proposals Closes: October 30, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- Conference Session Notifications: By December 12, 2026
- Session Materials Due for Review: June 1, 2027
- Final Documents Due for Inclusion in Mobile Site: June 14, 2027
- Conference: June 25-26, 2027



PREPARING YOUR PROPOSAL

As you create your proposal, please consider the following.

Audience

The following demographics are based on trends from the past 10 years of NVFC training conferences.

- 200 attendees representing 40+ states
- Current and emerging leaders in the fire and emergency services
- Half of attendees represent all-volunteer departments; the remaining are primarily mostly-volunteer or combination (with a small number of attendees from career departments or other organizations)
- Job titles include all ranks, including Chief, officers, R&R coordinators, training officers, administration, fire service instructor, and more
- A third of attendees are from departments serving a population of less than 5,000
- Attendees' years of experience ranges from 0-40+ years
- Ages 18-65+
- 70% male, 30% female

Target Topic Areas

The 2027 Training Summit will feature 90-minute breakout sessions in three tracks: Recruitment & Retention, Leadership, and Health & Safety. There are numerous topics within these tracks. You will be required to select one of the following topic areas in your submission form. These selections help us guide the balance of course offerings and will be used in the registration form to help attendees select the best courses for their goals.

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| ☐ Effective Training | ☐ Working Intergenerationally | ☐ Family Engagement | ☐ Management |
| ☐ Fireground/ Response | ☐ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | ☐ Work/Life/Volunteer Balance | ☐ Long-term Planning |
| ☐ Physical Health | ☐ Mentorship | ☐ Recruitment | ☐ Data for the Fire Service |
| ☐ Behavioral Health | ☐ Department Culture | ☐ Communication | ☐ Finding Funding and Resources |
| ☐ Fire & Life Safety Education | | ☐ Technology/AI | |

Tips for a Successful Proposal

- All proposals must be submitted using the online form, no exceptions. Think quality over quantity; you can submit up to three (3) proposals.
- The primary point of contact (POC) is the person submitting the proposal. The NVFC will communicate with the POC for all communications including notifications and deadlines, who must share information as needed with co-instructors. All proposed co-instructors must be listed.
- Use clear, error-free language. Session and workshop proposals require clear and concise titles, persuasive outcomes-focused descriptions, and at least three (3) action-oriented and well-thought-out learning objectives/takeaways that answer the prompt "after this session, participants will be able to..." (see *Appendix A for more information on creating objectives*). The NVFC retains the right to modify titles and descriptions during copy editing for marketing purposes.
- Don't underestimate the importance of a clearly defined instructional flow/design. Adult learning theory suggests that the best learning environments are those that are collaborative and utilize a problem-based approach, with content that ties back to the learners' lived experiences.
- Avoid all commercial bias/marketing tone. Any submission that is not educational in nature, neutral and unbiased, replicable by attendees without the author's assistance, and free of commercial motive will not be accepted.

IF YOUR PRESENTATION IS SELECTED

- All accepted presenters must be committed and responsive to working with the NVFC to deliver an exceptional attendee experience by adhering to deadlines. Key dates include:
 - Session needs (a/v, etc.) sent to staff: May 1, 2027
 - Session materials due for review: June 1, 2027
 - Final documents due for inclusion in mobile site: June 14, 2027
 - Conference: June 25-26, 2027
- All accepted presenters must register for the conference to ensure accurate counts for meals and space planning; registration is complimentary for instructors.
- Selected presenters will be eligible for a nominal stipend to offset your time and expenses. **Please note**, only one instructor per course is eligible for a stipend. You will receive more information if invited to present at the conference.
- For one instructor per course, all travel expenses will be reimbursed within the NVFC's travel policy, including lodging during the conference, transportation fees, and meals. You will receive more information if invited to present at the conference.
- All accepted content leaders must observe intellectual property rights. Presenters must ensure that information, illustrations, images contained in presentations, related materials, or visual aids shall be factual and not be misleading and will not violate the intellectual property or copyrights of any third party. Written documentation of ownership or permission must be provided upon request and is required for all video and television/film related imagery.

QUESTIONS

Thank you in advance for your time and for sharing your ideas, expertise, and leadership. The NVFC training and education team is here to help. If you have questions, please reach out anytime.

Amanda Tegtmeyer
Training Coordinator
amanda@nvfc.org

Appendix A

Writing Learning Objectives for Adult Learners

Learning objectives (also known as learning outcomes) are a key part of creating a successful training program. Put simply, learning objectives define what participants will learn and how you know that they learned it by the end of instruction. This is your map to a positive learning experience. You don't need a degree in education to write a great objective! Here are some tips for putting together your presentation objectives.

Use the ABCD Method

The ABCD Method provides a simple acronym for building objectives:

- **Audience** – Who is learning?
- **Behavior** – What will they be able to do differently at the end of instruction?
- **Condition** – Under what conditions will they be expected to achieve these new behaviors?
- **Degree** – How will they need to perform the new behavior?

All proposal submissions should start with, “At the end of the session, attendees will be able to...” which provides the “A” – audience. Now we need to fill in the B, C, and D.

Here's an example of objectives for a course on writing a year-long department training plan:

At the end of the session, attendees will be able to...

- List the 10 steps to creating a year-long training plan.
- Describe the four main training components to include in their plan.
- Locate resources to guide their plan development.

As you can see, these objectives are concise and realistic given the 90-minute timeframe of Training Summit presentations. Achieving these objectives will allow students to return to their organization with actionable next steps.

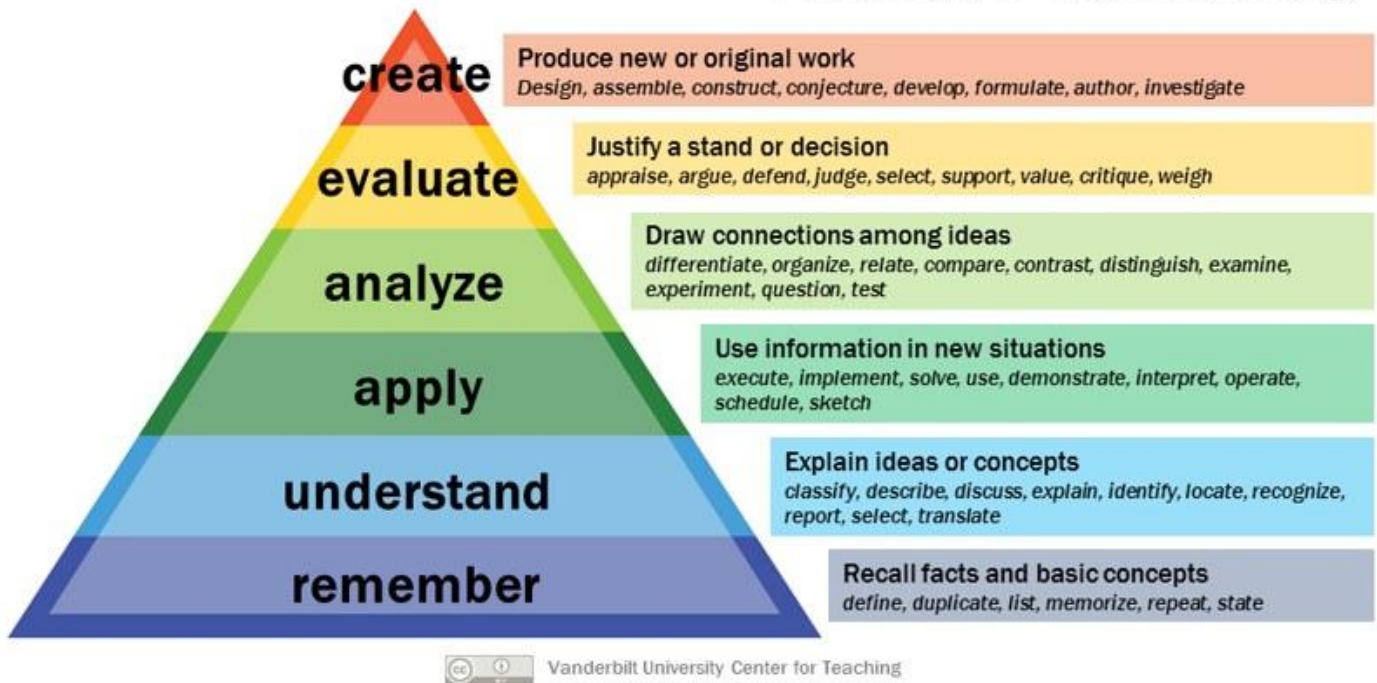
Incorporate Active Verbs

Notice that in the example objectives above, three active verbs are used: *list*, *describe*, and *locate*. These are all observable behaviors; the instructor can ask volunteers to demonstrate the objective to check understanding. Attendees can look at the objectives at the end of the course and see that they have learned everything that was promised. You can end your presentation by going back to the objectives slide and reviewing each one and what you've learned together.

It's tempting to write objectives using the term “understand” (i.e., ...Understand how to write a year-long training plan). Avoid using this vague verb in your objectives as it's not measurable, there are many levels of understanding, and individuals might have different ideas of what “understanding” a topic is. In contrast, you can ask an attendee to list the 10 steps to creating a year-long training plan and listen to them tick off the 10 steps. This shows you as the instructor – as well as the attendee – that learning has taken place.

A widely used source for active verbs is Bloom's Taxonomy. As you can see in the image, this divides verbs into six general levels of learning. For a 90-minute program, you'll likely want to utilize the action verbs suggested for the bottom two tiers – “remember” (words such as define, list, repeat) and “understand” (verbs such as describe, explain, locate).

Bloom's Taxonomy



Source: Armstrong, P. (2010). Bloom's Taxonomy. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved August 17, 2023, from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Effective Date: July 30, 2026

1. Purpose

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly used to support writing, research, meeting documentation, design, and communications. This policy establishes NVFC's expectations for the responsible use of AI in connection with NVFC business and sets standards for AI-assisted note-taking and AI-generated or AI-assisted content submitted to NVFC for publication. The goal is to enable staff, volunteers, board members, and partners to benefit from AI tools while protecting the accuracy, integrity, confidentiality, and credibility of NVFC's work.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all NVFC staff, board members, committee members, contractors, consultants, and volunteers acting on behalf of NVFC, as well as to any content submitted to NVFC by outside authors, partners, sponsors, or members for publication in NVFC channels (website, newsletters, social media, reports, or other materials).

3. Guiding Principles for Responsible AI Use

When using AI tools in connection with NVFC work, individuals must maintain active involvement in the decision-making process. Do not become over-reliant on AI to the detriment of human judgment and creativity.

- **Verify accuracy.** AI tools can produce plausible-sounding but incorrect, outdated, or fabricated information (including fake citations, statistics, or quotes). All AI-assisted work must be independently fact-checked before use or distribution.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** Do not input confidential, proprietary, donor, member, financial, personnel, or otherwise sensitive NVFC information into public or non-approved AI tools. Assume that anything entered into a public AI tool may be stored or used to train external models.
- **Preserve human judgment and accountability.** AI may assist with drafting, research, or brainstorming, but a human remains responsible for reviewing, editing, and approving any final output issued in NVFC's name. AI-generated content should never be published or acted upon without human review.
- **Protect NVFC's voice and mission alignment.** AI-assisted communications should be reviewed to ensure they reflect NVFC's tone, values, and mission, and are appropriate for the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue service audiences NVFC serves.
- **Respect intellectual property.** Do not use AI tools to reproduce copyrighted material without rights to do so, and do not represent AI-generated content as another person's original work (or vice versa).
- **Use approved tools where required.** Where NVFC designates approved AI platforms (e.g., for data security reasons), individuals should use those tools rather than unapproved consumer AI applications for NVFC business.

- **Disclose when appropriate.** Where AI has played a substantial role in producing content, staff should be prepared to disclose that use internally and follow the disclosure expectations in Section 5 for published content.
- **Incident Reporting.** Any suspected or confirmed security incidents related to generative AI usage should be reported promptly to the CEO.

4. AI Notetakers and Meeting Recording Tools

AI notetaking tools (e.g., bots that join calls to transcribe, summarize, or record meetings) raise concerns around consent, confidentiality, and data retention. NVFC's policy is as follows:

- **Staff and authorized use only.** AI notetakers may be used only by NVFC staff, committee chairs, or by others specifically authorized in advance by NVFC staff, to join or record NVFC meetings, calls, or webinars. No AI notetaker may be used by an outside party without prior NVFC staff authorization.
- **Removal on request.** If any participant objects to the use of an AI notetaker, the tool must be removed from the meeting or the recording/transcription feature disabled.
- **Data handling.** AI-generated notes and summaries must be reviewed by the staff and used to create minutes in the NVFC format before distribution. Participants should be asked to review and request corrections – just like any meeting.
- **No unauthorized bots.** Individuals may not add a personal AI notetaker (e.g., a tool tied to a personal account) to any NVFC meeting. Requests to bring outside AI notetakers to NVFC meetings should be directed to NVFC staff for approval.

5. Content Submitted to NVFC for Publishing

This section applies to articles, press releases, op-eds, case studies, social media content, sponsor/partner content, and similar materials submitted to NVFC for publication on NVFC's website, newsletters, social channels, or in print.

- **Disclosure of AI assistance.** Contributors must disclose to NVFC staff if AI tools were used to substantially draft, generate, or rewrite submitted content. Minor use (e.g., grammar/spell-check) does not need to be disclosed; substantial drafting or content generation by AI does.
- **Accuracy is the contributor's responsibility.** Regardless of whether AI was used, the submitting individual or organization is responsible for the accuracy, originality, and appropriateness of the content. NVFC is not responsible for verifying AI-generated claims, statistics, or quotes submitted by outside contributors, and reserves the right to request sourcing or verification before publishing.
- **No fabricated sources, quotes, or data.** Content containing AI-fabricated citations, statistics, quotes, testimonials, or attributions will not be published. Any factual claims must be independently verifiable.
- **No misrepresentation of authorship.** Content should not be presented as written by a specific named individual (e.g., a fire chief, member, or subject-matter expert) if it was substantially AI-generated without that person's meaningful review and approval.
- **Images and media.** AI-generated images, graphics, or video submitted for publication must be clearly identified as AI-generated, and must not depict real individuals, NVFC branding, or copyrighted material without appropriate rights or permission.
- **Editorial review and right of refusal.** All submitted content, AI-assisted or not, is subject to NVFC's standard editorial review. NVFC reserves the right to decline, edit, or request revisions to any submission that does not meet its accuracy, quality, or mission-alignment standards.
- **Copyright.** Do NOT use what AI generates without editing it. AI language is easily identifiable as AI generated. Add your own edits and information to what is generated. Verify the accuracy of the AI

generated data. There currently is not definitive answer on who owns copyright in AI generated content.

6. Data Security and Privacy

Individuals using AI tools on behalf of NVFC must not upload or input personally identifiable information about members, donors, staff, or volunteers; financial or donor data; unpublished board materials; legal or personnel matters; or other confidential NVFC information into public/consumer AI tools that are not approved by NVFC. Questions about whether a specific tool or use case is permitted should be directed to the CEO.

7. Violations

Failure to follow this policy may result in corrective action up to and including termination of employment, contract, or partnership, consistent with NVFC's other personnel and governance policies. Contributors who submit content in violation of Section 5 may have current or future submissions declined.

8. Policy Administration

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or as needed to reflect changes in AI technology, legal requirements, and/or NVFC practice. Questions about this policy, or requests for approval of a specific AI tool or use case, should be directed to the CEO.