

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals  
due  
April 1st

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*#Accept, Advocate, Act*

Hyatt Regency Chicago, IL | *November 13-15, 2025*



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*Absolutely love this annual event and proud to be a partner with the National Federation of Families*

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*This entire conference has been phenomenal. For all the hard work and the great efforts that had to go forth to make this happen. You are so appreciated!*

## FOR THE LAST 36 YEARS,

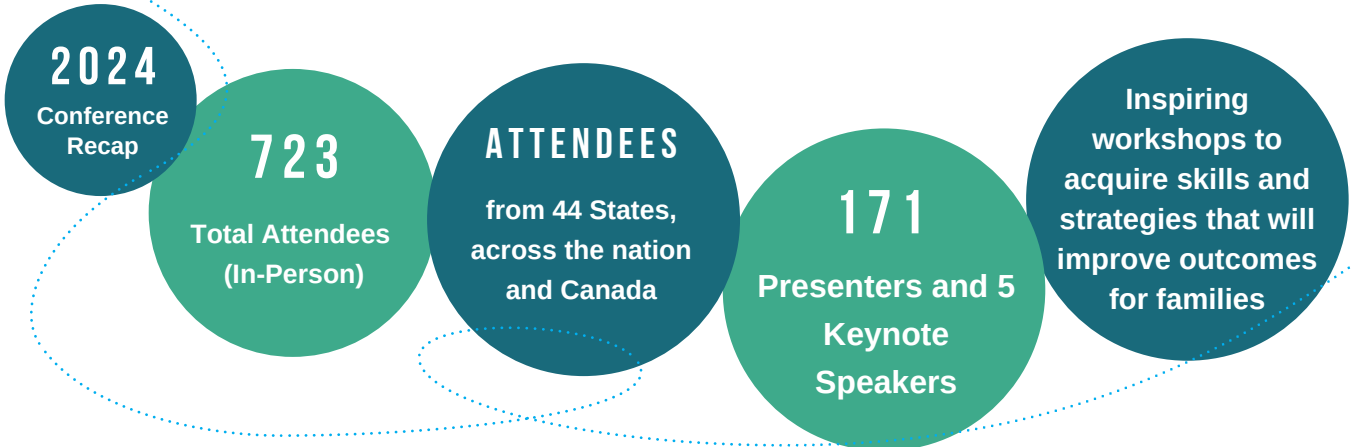
the National Federation of Families has brought together families, community leaders, providers, partners, and legislators at our Annual Conference. We work to leverage our lived experience and learned solutions for the support and advancement of families whose loved ones of any age experience mental health and/or substance use disorders during their lifetime.

To accomplish this, we welcome a diverse array of voices of those with lived experience for attendees to learn from and alongside.

We invite you to join us in this important work by submitting a proposal to present at the 2025 Annual Conference:

#Accept, Advocate, Act

November 13-15, 2025, in Chicago, IL



# AREA OF FOCUS

WE WELCOME PROPOSALS AND CONTENT THAT ALIGN WITH OUR TRACKS, AND NATIONAL CORE COMPETENCIES.



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## Accept

Proposals will explore strategies to enhance the acceptance of families and their loved ones who are experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges.



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## Advocate

Proposals will provide an enhanced understanding of how to effectively advocate for inclusions and parity in all family-serving systems.



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## Act

Proposals will tell lived experience stories of moving beyond advocacy into action and accountability for child, adult, and family system transformation.

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[Click to learn about our conference](#)



## WE WELCOME PROPOSALS AND CONTENT THAT ALIGN WITH OUR TRACKS AND NATIONAL CORE COMPETENCIES.

*We ask that you create a presentation that includes tools that can be applied nationally. Sessions and workshops will naturally fit into multiple tracks and likely appeal to a wide variety of attendees.*

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### Fatherhood Initiatives

Topics will include a focus on fatherhood, dads as caregivers, and men as Family Peers, with an emphasis on families and their loved ones. The presenter must be able to explain how the attendees can apply the ideas and tools anywhere in the nation.



### Supporting Families and Their Loved Ones Through the Lifespan

Topics in this track will include family engagement, navigating systems, developing authentic partnerships between families and providers, and the importance of understanding and accepting individuals who experience mental health and/or substance use disorders in all settings—homes, schools, community environments, the justice system, health care, and research. The presenter must be able to explain how the attendees can apply the ideas and tools anywhere in the nation.



### Supporting Families With Co-Occurring Disorders

Proposals in this track should address evidence-based, practice-based, and community-relevant topics that help different groups of individuals understand, discuss, address, and prevent intersecting mental health and substance use disorders. Such groups include families, the workforce that supports families and their loved ones, family-run organizations, and communities. The presenter must be able to explain how the attendees can apply the ideas and tools anywhere in the nation.



### Lessons From the Field

Presentations in this track will highlight strategies and practices that are proving successful in supporting, educating, and engaging families and their loved ones of all ages. Innovations, collaborations, and lessons learned will inform participants. The presenter must be able to explain how the attendees can apply the ideas and tools anywhere in the nation.



### Youth Workforce Development / Emerging Youth and Young Adult Leaders

Designing pathways for developing leadership skills and qualities in the next generation is essential. This can include programs, organizations, policies, and/or strategies that center youth voices, integrate and support youth as leaders, and promote sustainability by mentoring youth to take the reins on advocacy work. Presentations demonstrating Youth and Family Peers working in partnership to support families are particularly encouraged. The presenter must be able to explain how the attendees can apply the ideas and tools anywhere in the nation.



### Workforce Development

The focus of this track is the creation of a strong, healthy, and sustainable workforce to support families and their loved ones. Presentations that focus on peer support, supervising, hiring, retention, wages, peer drift, and moral injury and topics that are freshmen to senior level are encouraged. The presenter must be able to explain how the attendees can apply the ideas and tools anywhere in the nation.



## Session Formats

### Traditional Informational Sessions

These are **60-minute** presentations that should fall under or be closely related to at least one of the identified Areas of Focus.

- Accept
- Advocate
- Act

The primary goal of these sessions is to deliver quick and focused strategies, give brief overviews of a successful program, and/or present promising research and evaluation results.

### Workshop Saturday

**We will offer a limited number of specialty two-hour workshops on Saturday, November 15th.** These are more advanced and intensive training sessions for participants that include in-depth overviews of programs that can be adapted by family-run organizations across the nation, sets of skills related to a specific family support strategy, and/or advocacy workshops that train participants to take skills directly into their organizations and communities. **Please do not submit a 2-hour presentation if you cannot commit to presenting on Saturday, November 15th.**

Two-hour presentations **MUST** be focused on the national perspective and include tools that are applicable in any state. Special consideration will be given to presentations that address the core competencies.



*The lived experiences shared by plenary speakers were so moving. This conference was powerful.*



*I was so pleased with the networking and interaction between the attendees. I learned so much from families and other professionals.*



# CERTIFIED FAMILY PEER SPECIALISTS NATIONAL CORE COMPETENCIES

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COMPETENCIES, VISIT:

[CORE COMPETENCIES | NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES \(FFCMH.ORG\)](https://www.nffcmh.org)

## Competency

## Examples



### Resiliency, Recovery, and Wellness

- Holistic Approach to Wellness
- Promoting Resiliency
- Recovery Principles
- Impact of Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Grief
- Wellness Education
- Parenting Skills
- Self-Care and Community Care Strategies (For Providers and Families)



### Effecting Change

- Building Collaborative Partnerships
- Problem-Solving
- Relationship-Building
- Effective Advocacy
- Systems Navigation and how this is applicable across the country
- Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills
- Interpersonal Skills



### Resources and Natural Supports

- Helping Families Identify and Use Natural Supports
- Helping Families Access and Navigate Local Resources
- Identifying Family Strengths, Needs, and Outcomes
- Crisis and Safety Planning
- Family Relationship Building
- System-Partner Relationship Building
- Is Nationally focused



## Systems Knowledge and Navigation

- Education
- Behavioral Health / Mental Health
- Justice System
- Health Care
- Child Welfare
- Use of Peer Services
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Supports
- Substance Use
- Social Services
- Legal Rights and Responsibilities in System Supports
- Is Nationally focused



## Professional Responsibilities

- Basic Work Skills
- Family Peer Career Options
- Knowledge of Policies
- Ethics
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries
- Professional Development
- Is Nationally focused



# REVIEW & SELECTION CRITERIA

The process to accept workshops is very selective. There are a limited number of slots available, and the final decision is at the discretion of NFF. Each proposal will be reviewed with the following criteria in mind:

**Does the proposal fit within one or more of the conference areas of focus?**

- Accept
- Advocate
- Act

**Does the proposal address one of the competencies for Certified Family Peer Specialists (CFPS)?**

- Resiliency, Recovery, and Wellness
- Effecting Change
- Resources and Natural Supports
- Systems Knowledge and Navigation
- Professional Responsibilities

**Does the presentation fit in one or more of the identified tracks for the conference?**

- Fatherhood Initiatives
- Supporting Families and Their Loved Ones Through the Lifespan
- Supporting Families with Co-Occurring Disorders
- Lessons From the Field
- Youth Workforce Development / Emerging Youth and Young Adult Leaders
- Workforce Development





**Does the presentation contain content that can be replicated and adapted?**

If the proposal is based on programs specific to the presenter's agency, the proposal (and intended presentation) must indicate how this information can be adapted by other agencies.

**Lived Experience**

Is the voice of lived experience engaged in the presentation?

**Presentation**

- How will this presentation be interactive, thought-provoking, and action-oriented?
- Does the presentation have clear and easy-to-understand learning objectives?
- Does the presentation include tools and techniques applicable to anywhere in the country?

**Content**

Will the content be compelling and interesting to our audience?

**Presenter**

- Does the presenter have relevant knowledge, experience, and expertise on the topic?
- Does the presenter have previous national presentation experience?

**Proposals  
are due  
April 1st**





## Presenter Expectations

As a speaker representing NFF, you agree to be respectful of all attendees, speakers, volunteers, organizers, and hotel staff.

Workshops may be livestreamed to a virtual audience. Presentation format should accommodate and engage both virtual and in-person attendees. Speakers will need to stay in view of the camera and on-microphone for the duration of their presentations. Speakers are required to attend a virtual meeting where NFF staff will review the audio/visual and presentation suggestions and requirements. This will be offered at multiple times for your convenience.

**By submitting a proposal for consideration, you agree that if selected, you will be available to speak at any time during November 13th through the 15th. TIMES cannot be changed.**

## Presenter Deadlines and Information

Presenters are required to bring their laptop with their presentation loaded on to it, with a backup USB drive, as well as upload related resources (for example, documents, PowerPoints, or links) into our conference platform prior to their presentation. These resources provide support for the presentation and are valuable information for participants beyond the session.

- All presenters must be registered for the conference by **June 1st. There are no scholarships or registration discounts for presenters.**
- Final updates, handouts, and PowerPoints must be uploaded by **October 17th.**

**Note:** The agenda for the conference is built after all presenters are registered. Any presenter not registered will not be included in the conference agenda.

By submitting a proposal for consideration, each applicant acknowledges that they have read and agree to the terms listed above.



*The diversity, rich content, and expertise of breakout session presenters was phenomenal.*



# What to Expect When You Submit a Proposal

## Acknowledgment

Upon receipt of your submission, you will receive an email confirmation.

## Notification

All applicants will be notified about the status of their submission by **May 1st**.

## Accepted Proposals

All accepted presenters are responsible for registering for the conference by **June 1st**. All workshop presenters are responsible for conference registration fee, all travel-related expenses, including transportation and hotel accommodations. Do not submit a proposal if you cannot accept responsibility for travel-related expenses. There are no scholarships or registration discounts for presenters.

## Hotel

Speakers will have access to NFF's room block at the Hyatt Regency Chicago at a discounted rate of \$209/night. This price does not include taxes. The group rate is available for three days pre/post-event as well. Book early to get a room in this limited block. Please use the button below to make your reservations, which already has the code embedded for your ease.

[Book the Hotel](#)

**NFF will accept online applications only via our event management platform 'Whova'.** If you have trouble completing the form, please email [conference@fccmh.org](mailto:conference@fccmh.org) with questions.

The webform will prompt applicants to submit biographies, session descriptions, and learning objectives with contact information for every speaker. Incomplete applications will NOT be reviewed.



## Prepare to Submit the Following Information

### For All Presenters:

- Contact information, title and agency, bio, past presentation experience

### Presentation Information:

- Title
- Short Description (*This description will be used on our conference agenda to entice conference participants to choose your session.*)
- Expanded Description (*Include details about the benefits of your workshop, and strategies you will use to engage workshop attendees.*)
- Learning Objectives (*Provide two concrete, measurable learning objectives.*)
- *Does this presentation have lived experience representation?*
- *Describe how this presentation is applied nationally. The presenter must have at least one slide in the presentation that addresses national application.*
- A short description of each presenter's experience:
  - *Where have you presented before?*
  - *What is the average size of the national audiences to which you have presented?*
- What is the most applicable Area of Focus for your presentation: Accept, Advocate, or Act? Why is it applicable?
- What are the most applicable Tracks?
- How does your presentation connect to our National Core Competencies?
- Session Length



Ready to submit  
your proposal?

[Click here](#)

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For questions about proposals, please contact us at: [conference@ffcmh.org](mailto:conference@ffcmh.org)