SWE26 | **CALL FOR PARTICIPATION**
SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS MARCH 9TH

RADIATE CHANGE

Nov. 5-7
Thomas M. Menino
Convention & Exhibition
Center | Boston, MA

WE26 Call for Participation (**CFP**) for **Breakout Sessions**
Submission Guidelines

In November 2026, Society of Women Engineers (SWE) will offer its annual, international Women in Engineering (WE) conference (WE26). SWE is committed to making this WE Annual conference – like all our programming – a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment for all participants. Our goals in this **WE26 Call for Participation (CFP) for Breakout Sessions (Lectures, Panels, and Snap Sessions)** are: to ensure effective programming and speaking opportunities are provided, and to empower attendees to succeed at every stage of their professional development.

WE26 CFP Timeline

- CFP Opens: **January 12, 2026**
- CFP Closes: **March 9, 2026, 11:59pm US ET**

- CFP Notifications Sent: **May 22, 2026 ****
    - ➢ Please add **cfp@swe.org** to your email contacts to prevent your Notification email from going to Spam!
- Session Agreement Due & Schedule Availability Due: **June 15, 2026**, ONLY via Harvester portal

- Backup Session Notifications Sent: **June 24, 2026 ****
- Backup Session Agreement Due: **July 8, 2026,** ONLY via Harvester portal

- Session PowerPoint Due and Speaker Updates, Photos, and Bios Due: **October 5, 2026**, ONLY via Harvester portal

- **WE26 in Boston, Massachusetts: November 5-7, 2026**

Contents of this CFP Guidelines Document:

Scoring Rubric; Tips & Best Practices

Scoring Rubric

Breakout Sessions submitted to the WE26 CFP are scored as follows:

CFP 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

- **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 topics in Leader Levels 3 (Performing) & 4 (Transforming)** - SWE is actively looking for and encourages you to submit Performing and Transforming 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 Submission window 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.

- **Ask for reviewers** - Ask an experienced colleague to review your proposal before you submit it to ensure it is clear, concise, and enticing.

- **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."

How to Submit a Breakout Session Proposal to the WE26 CFP

❖ **Access the [online submission portal](#)** to submit your session proposal. The sections and questions below closely mirror the application content within the submission portal.

❖ **Need portal help?** View the **[short tutorial video](#)** showing how to submit a proposal (video from WE25, but the WE26 submission portal is very similar).

❖ **Need content help?** Take the **[short micro-learning course](#)** showing how to craft effective session descriptions and learning outcomes.

❖ **Need translation?** Use the built-in Google Translate function in the submission portal.

❖ **CFP submission deadline = Monday, March 9, 2026, 11:59pm US ET. Remember: No extensions are possible.**

*Questions with an **asterisk (*)** are required*

First time submitting to one of SWE's conferences? You'll need to create an account.

If this is your first time submitting, click Join Now to create an account. Then, you're ready to start your submission!

If you've submitted to any prior WE conference CFP process since WE Local 2024, you should be able to re-use your existing login credentials.

Basic Info (after login, in Submitter Dashboard, click "Click here to begin new proposal")

1. *** Title** (5 points) – The title is evaluated on being concise and capturing interest (limit to 10 words).

2. *** Format** (0 points) - Select the Breakout Session format that provides the appropriate time and number of presenters, and the best learning experience to achieve the learning outcomes.

   - **Important**: If you are uncertain which format to choose, please view the WE25 Breakout Session Schedule to get a sense of the types of sessions that tend to be selected in each format. Do **not** duplicate your content across multiple formats (e.g., creating two essentially identical submissions, but one is a Lecture and one is a Snap). If we find that you have submitted any duplicate or near-duplicate proposals across different formats, **all** of your submissions will be **disqualified.**

     - **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 plus 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 and thought-provoking. SWE typically schedules 2-3 snap sessions in a row, arranged according to themes. Must have minimum 1 and maximum 2 speakers.

Session Specifications Task

1. *** Track** (0 points) - Select the track that most closely relates to the subject matter of your session.

   - **Important**: If you are uncertain which track to choose, please view the WE25 Breakout Session Schedule to get a sense of the types of sessions that tend to be selected in each track. Do **not** duplicate your content across multiple tracks (e.g., creating two essentially identical submissions, but one is Track 2 and one is Track 3). If we find that you have submitted any duplicate or near-duplicate proposals across different tracks, **all** of your submissions will be **disqualified.**

     1. **Leading Self:** Leading others begins with leading ourselves. Leading Self sessions focus on one's behavior, skills, and attitudes as they relate to oneself. These key areas set the foundation for leadership beyond oneself. Examples include:
        - Self-reflection and assessment techniques to recognize strengths and opportunities for personal improvement
        - Best practices for developing and maintaining personal wellness
        - Strategies for creating a growth mindset

     2. **Developing Others:** The development of others is an essential part of leadership. Sessions in this track link with the skills and behaviors of leaders who invest in the growth of colleagues, peers, and direct reports. Examples include:
        - Using coaching to empower individuals
        - Best practices in mentoring and sponsorship
        - Building a learning culture

     3. **Leading Change:** Leaders are at the forefront of changemaking. Whether in the workplace, society, or even in informal settings. These sessions correlate with core leadership skills and behaviors involved with facilitating change. Examples include:
        - Communicating and advancing your organization's mission and vision
        - Using a systems thinking approach
        - Creating buy-in with stakeholders

4. **Communication:** Leaders communicate in many different environments; however, the essence of communication remains similar across various platforms. Digital or in-person, these competencies are critical for leaders at all levels. Examples include:
   ▪ Having difficult conversations and diffusing conflicts
   ▪ Using active listening and providing feedback
   ▪ Delivering effective and impactful presentations

5. **Business Acumen:** The complexities of organizations require leaders who can navigate various aspects of business, from finances to people management. Sessions in this track hone the competencies needed to maintain viable organizations. Examples include:
   ▪ Best practices in project management
   ▪ Strategic Planning
   ▪ Data Analytics and Business Intelligence

6. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging:** Commitment and skills related to DEI&B are essential in the modern leader's career. Concepts covered by sessions in this track include a variety of aspects related to the successful advancement of DEI&B in workplaces and professional relationships. Examples include:
   ▪ Techniques to build and promote a culture that values DEI&B
   ▪ Tools to be inclusive leaders and team members
   ▪ Leveraging intersectionality in the workplace

7. **SWE Leadership and Governance:** This track pertains to content related to supporting development and pathways to volunteer leadership positions within SWE (e.g., Section Leader, Committee Chair, Trustee, Senator, Director, etc.). Additionally, this track covers sessions highlighting components of the SWE Governance structure. Examples include:
   ▪ Ideas to support the next generation of engineers to become volunteer leaders
   ▪ Strategies to expand participation in your section or affiliate
   ▪ Best practices in volunteer management and satisfaction

8. **Technical Aspects:** Sessions in this track cover the machines, processes, materials, technologies, and techniques used in diverse engineering specialties. Examples include:
   ▪ Artificial Intelligence
   ▪ Energy Transition and Sustainability
   ▪ Best practices in product design and delivery

2. *** Leader Level of the Presenter(s)** (0 points) - Select the leader level which most closely aligns with the experience and background of the presenter(s) of this session.
   ○ **Important**: If you are uncertain which Presenter Leader Level to choose, please view SWE's Leadership Competency Model for more info. Do **not** duplicate your content across multiple Presenter Leader Levels (e.g., creating two essentially identical submissions, but one is P.L.L. 2 and one is P.L.L. 3). If we find that you have submitted any duplicate or near-duplicate proposals across different Presenter Leader Levels, **all** of your submissions will be **disqualified.**

   1. **Emerging**: An aspiring leader with limited or no SWE or other leadership experience (0-1 years of leadership experience). An emerging leader is in the process of learning about leadership but may not have hands-on experience as a leader yet. Emerging leaders are quick to learn and take on support-level tasks to move initiatives forward.

   2. **Developing**: An experienced leader with at least some SWE or other leadership experience (2-4 years of leadership experience). A developing leader has learned some of the basics about leadership and has had some real-world opportunities to practice their leadership skills. Developing leaders are in the process of gaining experience and exposure to a variety of leadership styles and methods, and are eager to support initiatives led by more senior leaders.

   3. **Performing**: Significant SWE or other leadership experience (5-9 years of leadership experience). A performing leader has demonstrated their effectiveness as a leader in a variety of settings and has had multiple opportunities

to refine their leadership abilities in diverse environments. Performing leaders support initiatives led by leaders at more advanced leadership levels.

4. **Transforming**: Extensive SWE or other leadership experience (10+ years of leadership experience). A transforming leader has a proven track record of success as a leader, having had varied and diverse opportunities to lead others through a variety of settings and circumstances. Transforming leaders influence other individuals toward a common goal and impact organizational change in a positive direction.

3. *** Leader Level of the Audience** (0 points) - Select the leader level that most closely aligns with the experience and background of the intended audience of this session.

   ○ **Important**: If you are uncertain which Audience Leader Level to choose, please view the WE25 Breakout Session Schedule to get a sense of the types of sessions that tend to be selected. For a session aimed at a broad audience, we recommend selecting one of the mid-career Audience Leader Levels: 2. Developing or 3. Performing. Do **not** duplicate your content across multiple Audience Leader Levels (e.g., creating two essentially identical submissions, but one is A.L.L. 2 and one is A.L.L. 3). If we find that you have submitted any duplicate or near-duplicate proposals across different Audience Leader Levels, **all** of your submissions will be **disqualified.**

   1. **Emerging**   2. **Developing**   3. **Performing**   4. **Transforming**

4. *** Keyword** (0 points) - Please choose one keyword from the list below that most closely represents the content of this session.

- academia
- advocacy
- AI (artificial intelligence)
- athletes / sports
- attraction / retention
- bias
- burnout
- career break / STEM re-entry
- career planning
- career transitions
- challenge / change
- cloud services / systems
- community colleges
- continuing education
- cross-cultural work
- data security
- digital twin
- disability
- effective communication
- emotional intelligence (EQ)
- entrepreneurship
- ERGs (employee resource groups)
- financial health
- first-gen experience
- generalists / broad skill sets
- global careers
- government
- grad students / programs
- health disparities

- healthcare technology
- hobbies
- immigrant experience
- imposter syndrome / confidence
- inclusivity
- internships / co-ops
- intersectionality
- introverts
- invisible labor
- late career / retiree
- layoff experience
- leadership
- legislation / public policy
- LGBTQ+ experience
- machine learning
- male allyship
- management
- mental health
- mentorship / sponsorship
- military
- motherhood / parenting
- neurodivergence / neurodiversity
- non-technical skills
- occupational health
- organizational development
- patents
- personal branding / self-representation
- product design / development / marketing

- productivity / time management
- professional development
- professional networking
- professional specialization
- project management
- psychological safety
- remote work
- representation / underrepresented identities
- resilience
- resume writing
- role models / early pioneers
- self-advocacy
- sick leave
- simulation
- small business
- specific technologies / technical solutions
- STEM curriculum development
- STEM subfield / discipline / industry
- strategic planning
- sustainability
- SWE leadership
- teamwork
- technical leadership
- VR (virtual reality)
- wellness
- work-life balance
- youth outreach
- Session content is not represented by any listed keyword.

5. *** Session Presented Before** (0 points) - Have you (i.e., you personally, or a presenter lineup mostly similar to the lineup you are submitting here) presented this session (i.e., this precise session, or a session mostly similar to it) at any previous WE Local or WE Annual conferences? Select all that apply.

- WE Local 2026
- WE25
- WE Local 2025
- WE24
- WE Local 2024

- WE23
- WE Local 2023
- WE22
- WE Local 2022

- I/we have NOT presented this or a similar session at any prior WE conference.

6. *** First-Time WE Presenter** (0 points) - If this session is accepted, would this be the first time the presenter(s) is/are presenting at any of SWE's Women in Engineering (WE) conferences?   Yes / No

   ○ Note: In order to answer Yes, all presenters on this session must be first-time WE presenters.

Session Description Task

1. * **DESCRIPTION** (10 points) – In 150 words or less, describe:

- What the topic is and why it's important,
- The purpose of the session, and
- 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, and (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 participating in your session (not what presenter(s) will do during the session). Each session is evaluated based on the learning outcomes **being clearly stated and achievable with instruction**. Further information on how to write effective learning outcomes.

Each learning outcome must **begin with a verb.** Examples of well-written learning outcomes include: "**Identify** the basic principles of data science" or "**Describe** useful conflict resolution techniques." Use a verb from the table below to start each of your learning outcomes.

- **Listen & Learn Lectures** and **Engaged Exchange Panels** must provide 3 Learning Outcomes.
- **Snap Sessions** must provide 2-3 Learning Outcomes.

- **Maximum 15 words per Learning Outcome.**

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 Qualifications Task

1-5.* **SESSION-SPECIFIC SPEAKER QUALIFICATIONS** (5 points) – **For each presenter** on this session, enter **their first and last name, and their qualifications to present on this topic.** Bullet points and simple sentences are ok. This is **different from a full professional bio**, which will be entered later.

Reviewers will view this information. Reviewers need to see: (1) presenter first and last names, in order to understand whether they have a conflict of interest with this session/ these presenters; and (2) presenters' qualifications on this particular session topic, in order to assess all proposed speakers' ability to present on this topic.

Failure to enter qualifications for all proposed speakers, or entry of placeholder text (e.g., "will submit qualifications later"), will result in a deduction in the Speaker Qualifications category.

For example, for a session on AI, the following speaker qualifications might be listed:

- **Jane Doe** is Senior Technical Leader of AI Projects for Fictional Company
- Has 10 years' experience AI implementations in web projects
- Currently researching new fractal models for AI
- Previously presented on unique benefits and challenges of AI at Fiction Conference 2023

Video - Link Input Task

1. **VIDEO PITCH, OPTIONAL** (0 points) - Submit a video pitch (max. 90 seconds) illustrating (1) why the topic is of interest to attendees, and (2) the speakers' comfort with public speaking. SWE recommends using Zoom, Teams, Google Meeting, or Webex to record the video. Alternatively, you may submit a sample video excerpt (max. 90 seconds) from a past speaking event if the speaker lineup was highly similar to the speaker lineup you are proposing here.

Please submit your video pitch as a streaming link. If you currently have a video file (.mov, .mp4, etc.), please upload it to a streaming platform of your choice, such as Vimeo (see https://vimeo.com/upload) or YouTube, then enter the streaming URL in this Task. If the streaming link is password-protected, please be sure to include the password within this Task.

If you do not wish to submit a video, click into this Task, leave the text field blank, and click Continue to complete the Task.

Speaker Information Task

1-10.   *** SPEAKER INFORMATION** - For each presenter, enter the information listed below.

- **Listen & Learn Lectures** and **Snap Sessions must** have 1 or 2 Speakers.
- **Engaged Exchange Panels must** have 1 Moderator + 2-4 Speakers, i.e., 3-5 Presenters total.
- All sessions may optionally list up to 5 Auxiliary Contacts, i.e., additional persons/email addresses who will be notified whether this session is accepted for presentation at WE26. We only need name, email, and role for Auxiliary Contacts; you're welcome to enter placeholder values for Auxiliary Contacts' other fields.

- We recommend that all persons listed in this Speaker Information Task add **cfp@swe.org** to their email contacts to prevent their Notification email from going to Spam.

- **Important**: If this session is accepted for presentation at WE26, the numerically first person in your Speaker List will be the one who must complete several crucial session-info tasks (Session Agreement, Schedule Availability, and PowerPoint Upload). **Use the up/down arrows in the Speaker Information Task to ensure that a reliable point person is listed first**. If this session is accepted for presentation at WE26, you will have the opportunity to change your presenter order later.

- * First and last name
- * Email address
- * Role in this Session: Speaker / Moderator / Auxiliary Contact
- * Phone number
- * City and country
- * Title/position
- * Company/organization
- * Gender (select from list; includes Prefer Not To Answer option)
- * Racial or cultural group (select from list; includes Prefer Not To Answer option)
- * Member of the LGBTQ+ community? (Yes / No / Prefer Not To Answer)
- * Years of experience on session topic: 1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 20+
- * Public speaking level: Novice / Advanced Beginner / Competent / Proficient / Expert
- * Any accessibility requirements?
- * Is this speaker a SWE Member? Yes / No
- * Is this speaker a member of any [SWE Affinity Groups?](#) Check all that apply.
- * Speaker photo (can be a placeholder image for Auxiliary Contacts)
- * Bio (150 words) - This should be a **generalized professional bio,** including the speaker's **first and last name**, and written in **third person** using **complete sentences**. If this session is accepted for presentation at WE26, this bio will port over to the accepted session portal, where you will have an opportunity to edit this bio later, if desired.

Acknowledgements Task

1. *** Funding Acknowledgement** (0 points) - I understand that SWE does not provide any honoraria to Breakout Session presenters, nor any funding to support Breakout Session presenters' travel, lodging, and expenses. If this session is selected for presentation at WE26, all presenters on this session will be responsible for funding their own travel, lodging, and other conference-related expenses. SWE does, however, provide Breakout Session presenters a discount code for their conference registration.

2. *** Acknowledgement of Requirement to Click Submit** (0 points) - I understand that, after completing all Tasks, I must click the Submit button in order to finalize and submit my proposal. If I fail to click Submit, my application will remain frozen in Active / Incomplete status, meaning it will be ineligible for presentation at WE26.
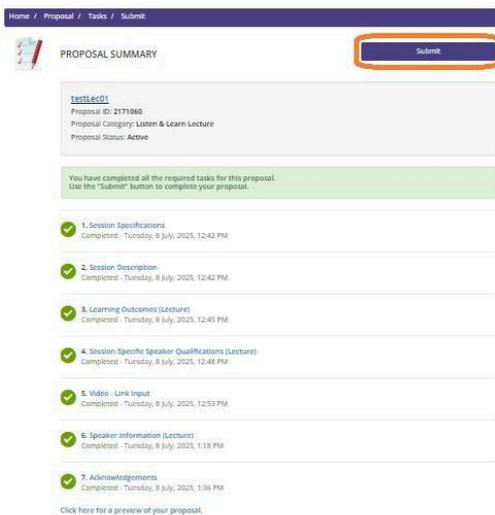

Image 1: an incomplete application.
When you see this screen, you still need to click
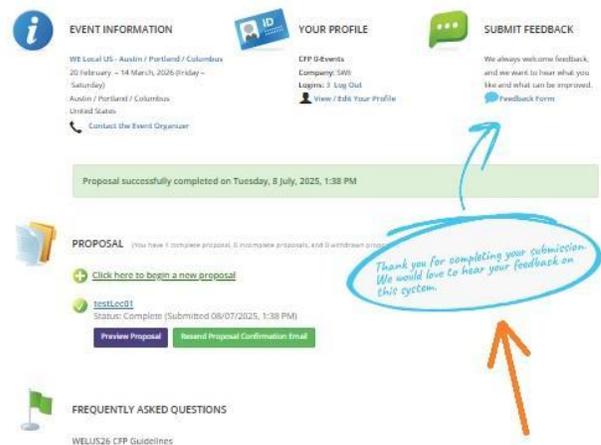Submit in the upper right.

Image 2: Submission Dashboard immediately after submission.
A blue, handwritten-style graphic invites you to enter
optional feedback on your submission experience.

Thank you for submitting! Please add cfp@swe.org and welocal@swe.org to your email contacts so you don't miss important correspondence, such as whether this session is accepted for presentation

testLec01
Status: Complete (Submitted 08/07/2025, 1:38 PM)

Call for Participation: WE Local US - Austin / Portland / Columbus

You can access your Proposal at any time by clicking here.

Proposal Category
Listen & Learn Lecture

Proposal Status:
Complete

Proposal ID:

Image 3: Dashboard close-up: successfully submitted proposal.
A successfully submitted proposal shows "Status: Complete (Submitted mm/dd/yyyy, hh:mm.)" If your proposal shows "Status: Incomplete," you have not yet submitted.

Image 4. Submission confirmation email.
Immediately after submission, the submitter will receive a confirmation email from cfp@swe.org. You may need to check your Spam. If you do not receive a submission confirmation email, you have not successfully submitted.

Optional Edits + How to Withdraw a Proposal

You may edit in-progress or submitted sessions any time up until the submission deadline. Inside 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 Format (Lecture / Panel / Snap).
- 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 WE26 Breakout Session speakers are volunteers who provide their expertise and time at no cost to SWE.
- Accepted Breakout Session speakers will be provided with a discount code for registration.
- For any general questions about the WE26 conference, contact SWE at conferencemanager@swe.org. For specific questions on submitting a Breakout Session proposal to the Cadmium portal, contact cfp@swe.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

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

   Yes, with two crucial caveats:

   > a) To provide opportunities to as many people as possible, SWE tends not to accept more than one session per person. However, submitting multiple proposals may increase your chances of having one proposal selected, especially if submitting together with other speakers.

   > b) Your multiple proposals must be substantively **different**. SWE does not accept duplicate proposals. For instance, if you are uncertain whether your session should be a Listen & Learn Lecture or a Snap Session, you must choose one, **not** duplicate the content to propose it once as a Lecture and once as a Snap. If you submit **any** duplicate or near-duplicate proposals, **all** your submissions will be **disqualified**.

2. **Does SWE accept Breakout Session presenters who do not identify as women?**

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

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

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

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

   The Poster Competition process is entirely separate from the CFP Breakout Session process. Please visit WE Local Posters to get a sense of Poster content and the Poster process at WE Conferences.

5. **How do I submit a Keynote presentation proposal?**

   The Keynote selection process is entirely separate from the CFP Breakout Session process, and usually occurs at least one year before the conference. Please visit WE Local Keynotes to get a sense of Keynote presentations and the Keynote process at WE Conferences.

6. **Does SWE offer an honorarium to speakers who are selected through the CFP submission process?**

   No. Speakers 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 CFP speaker fees. However, SWE does provide a **discount code to all speakers selected through the WE26 CFP, which allows discounted registration** for WE26.