



Guide for Submitting a Successful APBS Conference Presentation Proposal

Purpose of the Guide

Proposals submitted for the APBS Conference Call for Papers undergo a **blind peer review** process using a scoring rubric. Proposals that are accepted typically offer a clear, compelling submission that aligns with four key priority areas:

- a. **Relevance and Significance** – Addresses content of importance to the field and the APBS primary audience; strongly aligns with the core features and applications of positive behavior support.
- b. **Conceptual and Empirical Strength** – Demonstrates sound conceptual grounding and/or presents valid and reliable empirical data.
- c. **Clarity of Objectives and Fit for Format** – Aligns with clearly stated objectives and appropriately matches the content with the session type and time allocation.
- d. **Alignment with APBS Mission and Commitment to Equity** – Explicitly supports and reflects APBS's mission and equity principles.

Successful proposals are well-organized, clearly written, and consistently address these criteria. Proposals that are not accepted typically fall into one or more of the following categories:

- a. The topic does not align with the **APBS Mission and Commitment to Equity**.
- b. The topic is not relevant or significant for the **field or APBS audience**.
- c. The content does not reflect the **core features of positive behavior support**.
- d. The proposal lacks **sufficient detail or clarity** to achieve a high review score.



Using the Guide

This guide is divided into three sections:

1. **Preparing and Submitting Your Proposal** – A checklist of steps authors should follow during the proposal development process.
2. **Proposal Scoring Criteria** – A detailed explanation of how proposals are scored and how authors can align their content with review expectations.
3. **Submission Process** – Instructions for submitting proposals online through the conference portal, including details on submitting for BCBA and NASP continuing education credit consideration.

Author Guidelines

To ensure a diverse range of presenters and topics, a limit is placed on the number of peer-reviewed proposals a lead author may submit:

- A lead author may submit up to **two proposals**.
- These may include one **oral presentation** (single, multi-presenter, or panel) and one **poster presentation**.
- A lead author **may not** lead two oral presentations or two poster presentations.
- A lead author may also serve as a **co-presenter** (not lead) on **one additional proposal**.

APBS Mission and Commitment to Equity

It is essential that your proposal explicitly aligns with the APBS mission and commitment to equity, as this is a critical component of the review process.

APBS Mission Statement

The mission of APBS is to enhance the quality of life of individuals across the lifespan by promoting evidence-based and effective positive behavior support (PBS) strategies to achieve socially valid and equitable outcomes for individuals, families, schools, agencies, and communities.

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Commitment to Equity

APBS is dedicated to equity, human rights, and social justice—especially for historically marginalized and oppressed communities, families, practitioners, and students. Through systems development and evidence-based strategies, APBS works to disrupt interpersonal and structural forms of discrimination and racism to foster equitable and meaningful outcomes for all.

Section 1. Preparing to Submit Your Proposal

1. Plan Ahead

- **Submission Deadline:** All proposals must be submitted by **September 8, 2025**, at **midnight U.S. Eastern Time**. Plan your work timeline accordingly to meet this deadline.
- **Select a Strand:** Identify the strand that best aligns with the focus of your proposal. Below are the strands and their brief descriptions:
 - **Early Childhood:** Focuses on systems change, research, evidence-based practices, and case studies involving young children (birth to age 5) and the implementation of positive behavior support (PBS).
 - **Integration and Alignment:** Highlights frameworks that align and integrate systems of support (e.g., MTSS, mental health, juvenile justice) to improve student success and interagency collaboration.
 - **Individual Students and Tier 3:** Emphasizes the use of PBS to support individual students, focusing on case-specific implementation within school settings.
 - **Classroom:** Explores the application of PBS strategies within classroom environments for students with and without disabilities.
 - **Tier 2:** Targets interventions for students who need additional, targeted supports beyond universal strategies.
 - **School-Wide Systems (Tier 1):** Highlights initiatives aimed at implementing and sustaining PBS practices across schools, districts, and states.
 - **Equity:** Focuses on using PBS to promote fair, inclusive education and improved outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds.
 - **Home and Community:** Examines PBS implementation across the lifespan in non-school settings such as homes, community centers, employment programs, and eldercare facilities.
 - **IDD:** Centers on PBS for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in non-school environments. IDD includes a range of cognitive and physical impairments affecting daily living skills.

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- **Families and Parent Supports:** Showcases strategies for engaging and supporting families in PBS efforts across school, home, and community settings.
 - **Mental Health:** Focuses on the intersection of PBS and mental health, including wellbeing, health, and quality of life in relevant settings.
 - **Choose Your Presentation Format and Event Option:**
 - Indicate whether you are submitting for the **in-person event in Minneapolis (March 11–13, 2026)**, the **online event launching in Fall 2026**, or **both**.
 - **Note:** You may not submit identical proposals for multiple formats or events.
 - While APBS will strive to honor your delivery preference, we reserve the right to assign formats based on program needs and space availability.
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Session Formats

- **Presentation or Panel (60 minutes):**

Ideal for dynamic presenters or teams (up to 4 presenters + 1 moderator). These interactive sessions should align with conference themes and actively engage attendees.
 - **Virtual Spotlight (30–40 minutes, pre-recorded):**

Share a recorded session for attendees to access online at their convenience. Maximum of 4 presenters. Include contact details at the end for follow-up.
 - **Learn and Design Lab (45 minutes):**

Designed for hands-on, participatory experiences. Begin with a short (5–10 minute) presentation followed by small group collaboration. Maximum of 2 presenters.
 - **Birds-of-a-Feather (45 minutes):**

Facilitated small-group discussions (up to 20 participants) on a focused topic. Encourages networking and idea exchange. Maximum of 2 facilitators.
 - **Workshops (Half- or Full-Day, March 11 Only):**

In-depth, interactive learning led by experienced facilitators. Workshops allow for exploration of advanced strategies and may include an honorarium. Up to 4 facilitators allowed.
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Poster Presentations (45 minutes)

- Ideal for visually presenting research or projects in a relaxed, interactive setting.
- Presenters will be provided an **8' x 30" table** and a **3' x 4' poster board**.

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- Presenters are responsible for any needed AV, electricity, or internet, which must be arranged at their own expense.

Ted Carr Outstanding Poster Awards (Students Only):

- Two scholarships will be awarded to students presenting original research or research-based practitioner/teacher education content.
- To be eligible:
 1. Must be an APBS Student Member.
 2. Must arrive and be fully set up **30 minutes before** the Poster Session & Reception begins.
 3. Must display the APBS-generated poster session sign visibly at their table.

Selecting Your Session Type and Preparing Presenter Information

Choose the Area of Emphasis and Session Type

Select the session category that best aligns with your proposal. There are four primary session types, each designed with a specific structure and purpose:

- **Expert Lecture**
A single expert presents on a conceptual or methodological innovation, followed by a Q&A session with the audience.
- **Skill-Building Session**
Focuses on teaching a specific skill. Participants are provided time during the session to actively practice the skill.
- **Demonstration**
A structured presentation showing how to apply a specific evaluation method, concept, or tool. Unlike Skill-Building Sessions, demonstrations do **not** include interactive practice for attendees.
- **Think Tank**
A collaborative session centered on one key question or issue. Presenters set the stage with background information, then attendees break into small groups for discussion before reconvening for a facilitated group conversation. Abstracts should clearly outline:
 - The central question or issue
 - Key contextual factors
 - Roles of the breakout groups



Additional Session Formats

- **Panel Presentation**
A coordinated session featuring 2 to 4 panelists (optionally including a discussant) who share perspectives on a shared theme or issue in PBS. The abstract must reflect the overall coherence of the session.
 - **Roundtable Discussion**
A 60-minute session typically split between a brief presentation (30 minutes) and a facilitated group discussion (30 minutes). Presenters must prepare targeted discussion questions to guide meaningful dialogue. Roundtables are ideal for exploring focused or emerging topics.
 - **Poster Presentation**
A visual format used to share research, data, or practical insights. Poster sessions are especially suited for students, early career professionals, and first-time presenters at conferences.
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Presenter Information

If your session includes more than one presenter, please ensure the following:

- Designate **one** individual as the *lead presenter*
- Collect and provide accurate details for each presenter, including:
 - Full name
 - Professional title
 - Email address
 - Institutional affiliation

Prepare the Abstract and Learning Objectives

Before You Begin Your Online Submission:

We recommend drafting your proposal in a Word document first. Include your session title, abstract, and learning objectives. This will make it easier to copy and paste into the online form and reduce formatting or submission errors.

Creating Your Proposal:

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- **Title (95-character limit):**
Create a clear, engaging title that accurately reflects your session topic and draws attendees' interest.
- **Learning Objectives (100-word limit):**
Develop 3 to 5 concise learning objectives. Your abstract should clearly explain how each objective will be addressed during the session.

Note: If you are requesting to offer Type 2 BCBA CEUs or NASP CDPs, ensure your objectives align with the BCBA Task List or NASP Domains of Practice, respectively.

- **Abstract (450-word limit):**
Your abstract should clearly communicate the content and value of your session. Reviewers will evaluate it based on specific scoring criteria (see the following section). Strong abstracts should:
 - Use clear, concise language and a logical structure.
 - Begin with a brief introduction that outlines the topic.
 - Describe the theoretical foundation, research base, or established practice informing your session. Formal research is not required, but sessions based on experience alone will not be accepted.
 - Clearly explain what content will be presented and how it will be delivered.

Example: "Participants will engage in hands-on activities, including scoring their own multi-tiered process using an evaluation tool."

- Articulate the session's relevance to the field and how it aligns with the APBS mission.
- **Final Review:**
Carefully proofread your proposal for spelling, grammar, clarity, and completeness before submitting.

Important Reminder on Product Promotion:

Proposals primarily focused on promoting a commercial product (e.g., books, training programs, consulting services) are not appropriate for peer review. To explore promotional opportunities, please contact: exhibitors@apbs.org.



2. Write a Session Summary (Short Description for the Program)

You must provide a brief session description (max. 75 words) that will be printed in the conference program. This summary helps attendees decide whether to attend your session, so make it count.

Tips for Writing an Effective Session Summary:

- Highlight the practical value of the session—what participants will gain or how they can apply the content.
- Clearly identify the problem or challenge your session addresses.
- Be honest and precise—avoid overstating outcomes or implying applications where none exist.
- Skip filler phrases like “In this session, we will...” and start with the core message.
- Write compellingly—this is your chance to make attendees want to join your session.

The next section provides guidance on abstract evaluation criteria, which can help you further strengthen your submission and improve your chances of acceptance.

Section 2. Aligning the abstract with the scoring rubric:

Your **abstract is the most critical part of your proposal submission**. In 450 words or fewer, clearly and thoroughly describe what will be presented and how the content contributes to the field of Positive Behavior Support. The proposal will be evaluated based on the following four categories:

1. Significance of Content to the Field

Your topic should be **meaningful to the APBS community** and **linked to its mission**. Describe how your session adds value to the field—whether by expanding current practices, policies, or applications across the lifespan (e.g., early childhood, K–12, community, adult, or aging populations).

Avoid overly general proposals. For instance, simply outlining a district’s Tier 1 implementation process is unlikely to score well. Instead, focus on aspects such as:

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- Implementation in underserved or unique settings (e.g., alternative schools, rural areas, juvenile justice)
 - Addressing specific challenges (e.g., community partnerships, cultural responsiveness, disproportionality)
 - Advancing equity, inclusiveness, or innovation in practice
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2. Conceptual or Empirical Strength

Whether your proposal is **research-based or practitioner-oriented**, ensure it's grounded in sound theory or evidence. If you're sharing practice-based content, demonstrate:

- How practices were selected (e.g., informed by literature or evidence-based models)
- How outcomes were assessed—even if not through formal research

If you're presenting a **research study**, include:

- Clear methodology
- Preliminary or final results
- Implications for practice
- A plan for completion if data are still being analyzed

Avoid vague ideas or untested strategies without rationale or evaluation.

3. Clarity of Proposal

Be explicit about:

- **What** content will be presented
- **How** it will be delivered (e.g., case study, demonstration, discussion)
- **What participants will gain** (tie to your 3–5 learning objectives)

Use action-oriented learning objectives (e.g., “Identify,” “Analyze,” “Apply”) that align with your content. Vague or overly general proposals often receive lower scores—clarity is key.

4. Support for APBS Mission and Equity

Describe how your session helps participants:

- Reduce challenging behaviors
- Increase independence
- Improve quality of life across domains such as social relationships, employment, education, life skills, self-determination, health, and safety

Your content should reflect APBS's commitment to **equity, inclusion, and practical impact**.



Final Tips

- **Be concise but thorough.**
- **Avoid spelling/grammar errors.**
- **Start with a compelling introduction** to draw the reviewer in.
- **Organize your content clearly**—what, how, and why it matters.

A well-crafted proposal shows your content is relevant, well-supported, and clearly presented—maximizing your chance of acceptance.

Section 3: Submitting On-Line

All proposals for the APBS Conference must be submitted online via Cadmium. Please follow the steps below to complete your submission.

Step 1: Register

- Create a username and password and provide the required demographic information.
- Your username and password will be used to log in and:
 - Submit a new proposal.
 - Review or edit any submitted proposals until the Call for Papers deadline:
September 6, 2024, at 11:59 PM (US Eastern Time).

Step 2: Submit Your Proposal

Note: If you prepared your proposal in Word, you may copy and paste it into the online form.

Presentation Format

- Choose your preferred presentation format.
- You may also indicate additional acceptable formats, which may increase the likelihood of acceptance.

Proposal Content

- **Title** (95 characters or fewer)
- **Objectives**
- **Program Summary** (75-word summary published in the program if accepted)
- **Abstract** (Up to 450 words)

Presenter Information

- For each presenter (starting with the lead presenter):
 - Full name
 - Email address

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- Institutional affiliation (including name, city, state, country)
- Co-presenters may be added, or you may present solo.

Keywords and Classification

- **Primary Strand** (e.g., Early Childhood, Tier 1, Mental Health, Equity, etc.)
- **Skill Level** (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced)
Note: Intermediate or Advanced content is required for BCBA or NASP CEU eligibility.
- **Relevant Settings** (e.g., Home, School, Community, Organization/Agency)
- **Areas of Focus** (select one or more: Systems Change, Assessment, Data-based Decision Making, Instruction, etc.)

Additional Information

- **Recording Permission**
Indicate whether APBS may record your session for the conference platform.
If offering NASP credits, and selected for recording, you must provide 8 multiple-choice post-test questions per hour of content by February 2, 2026.
- **Membership and Network Affiliations**
Indicate if you are an APBS member and list any networks you are affiliated with.
- **Presenter Responsibility**
Confirm that all presenters must register and attend the conference at their own expense if accepted.
- **Student Status**
Indicate if the lead presenter is an undergraduate or graduate student.
- **Financial Disclosure**
Disclose any financial interest related to the presentation topic or associated products/services.

Continuing Education Credit Options

If you wish to offer CEUs, additional information is required.

BCBA Type II CEUs

- Confirm the lead presenter is a BCBA in good standing.
- Upload the presenter's CV.
- Provide the BCBA certification number.
- Indicate relevant skills from the BCBA Task List that align with your session objectives.

NASP CPDs

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- Upload the lead presenter's CV.
- Identify the NASP Domain(s) of Practice your session addresses.
- Confirm that the lead presenter has appropriate training/experience.
- Agree to uphold NASP's *Principles of Professional Ethics*.
- If your session is recorded, agree to submit 8 multiple-choice post-test questions per hour of content by February 2, 2026.

Final Step

After submitting, you will receive a confirmation email verifying that your proposal was successfully submitted.

Good luck! We hope to see you at [APBS 2026 Conference United in Impact: Strengthening the PBS Community for a Better Tomorrow](#)