



October 21–24, 2026 | Columbus, Ohio

Call for Content (CFC) Guide

Open from Friday January 9 – Friday March 27, 2026

About SPARK

IEC SPARK is the gathering for professionals in the electrical contracting industry, bringing together contractors, suppliers, and innovators from across the nation. This annual event offers a unique blend of education, networking, and access to cutting-edge solutions, designed to empower attendees to excel in their careers and businesses.

SPARK delivers a robust lineup of educational sessions curated by industry experts, covering essential topics like emerging technologies, safety standards, NEC, business strategies, and workforce development. These sessions provide actionable insights to enhance skills and drive professional success.

The value of education at SPARK:

- **Outcome-Driven:** SPARK attendees receive actionable insights to take back and deploy fueling business and career success.
- **Community Building:** SPARK is a place where long-lasting industry connections form through shared learning experiences.

Call for Education Content

This year we are encouraging tailored sessions to address the challenges and opportunities that matter most to **electrical contractors**. We welcome submissions that:

- Feature innovative solutions - presenting cutting edge strategies that attendees can apply directly to their business or workforce.
- Offer strong business cases supported by research or data
- Showcase forward-thinking approaches and trends in the field
- Feature engaging, creative program formats
- Share real-world case studies that highlight practical applications
- Each proposal should aim to provide actionable insights that empower electrical contractors and inspire meaningful progress in the industry.

Instructional Design Guidelines

Proposals should:

- Be grounded by effective learning principles
- Aim to transfer knowledge and develop new competencies
- Foster discussion, encourage active audience engagement, and be outcome-focused
- Draw upon and build on participants' prior knowledge and experiences

Attendee Audience

SPARK educational content primarily serves **electrical contractors**. Proposals should clearly specify the knowledge level and prior experience the attendee should have in the content area to ensure the session delivers maximum impact.

SPARK also offers educational content for the IEC Chapter staff community. Session submissions targeting this audience should be specified as such.

About the Review and Session Selection Process

IEC strives to be inclusive and diverse when reviewing session proposals, which combines the collective input of peers, volunteer leaders, and professional staff to ensure that members of the community have significant voice in co-creating the conference programming. Together, members and staff create an educational program that is timely, relevant, and targeted to attendee needs.

IEC's Event Advisory Committee evaluates each course proposal based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight (%)
Relevance to the Audience	20%
Actionable Outcomes	25%
Speaker Expertise	20%
Engagement & Interactivity	15%
Supporting Evidence	20%
Total Score	100%

Important Submission Guidelines and Speaker Expectations

- You are limited to submitting two total proposals, so be thoughtful about what you submit.
- Each proposal can have a maximum of five total speakers.
- Accepted speakers **are expected to register for the conference at the discounted speaker rate** and will cover their own travel and accommodations.
- Submissions will be considered based on the quality of the session description and learning objectives, experience of the proposed speaker(s), and alignment to targeted educational topics.



- Please DO NOT include any reference to your name in the session title, description, or learning objectives. Only provide speaker information when asked for details such as name, bio, and speaking history.

Important Dates

- Call for content is open Friday January 9 and closes Friday March 27, 2026
- Conference Session Notifications: Early June 2026

Topic Areas

As you create your proposal, please consider the following topics, which are focus areas for the conference program. While proposals may address more than one area, you should select the one which is the best fit. The example topics noted below are intended to help you develop/plan, but we welcome and encourage additional ideas.

Business Development

- Financial Foundations: Focusing on reading statements, cashflow for profit, diversify revenue, renewable energy installation, maintenance contracts, succession planning
- Proofing your Business: Preparing for industry changes, regulatory updates and advocacy
- Succession Planning for the future of your business
- Business Growth Strategies: Expanding a team, bidding for larger projects, entering new markets
- Contract and Legal: Contract clauses, legal compliance, protecting your business
- Effective Leadership: Leading teams, managing conflicts, inspiring innovation
- Team Communication: Conflict resolution, active listening, stronger teams through communication
- Productivity: Time management, tool organization, workflow
- Project Estimating: Materials, labor costs, bid prep

Workforce Development

- Apprenticeship at your company
- Developing the future electrical pipeline: engaging with communities, local organizations, and schools
- Employee recruitment programs
- Employee development and continuing education programs
- Career Pathways: Growth within the industry and how to advance careers, certifications, career mapping, leadership development

Emerging Technology

- Integrating AI into your business
- Electric Vehicle infrastructure and renewable energy integration
- EV Charging
- Pre-fabrication and modular construction
- Microgrids



- Digital transformation: Utilizing data, project management software, and other digital tools to drive efficiencies
- Sustainability Focus and smart buildings

Safety - NEW in 2026 IEC will host a Safety Pre-Conference on Wednesday October 21st

Submitted sessions will be evaluated for both Pre-Conference and SPARK safety track.

- Creating a culture of risk management
- Safety training for the workforce
- OSHA regulatory and compliance updates
- Mental health awareness, suicide prevention with the construction industry
- Understanding Electrical Codes and Standards: NEC, updates and regulations
- Understanding NPFA 20, 70E, and 70B
- Mitigating risk through proper PPE
- Keeping the workforce safe: Construction Focus Four Hazards
- Ergonomics in the electrical field
- Tool Safety & Usage
- Hazard Identification & Mitigation

Women in Power

- Career Path Development, Advancement, and Long-Term Growth
- Leadership Development at All Career Stages
- Mentorship and Sponsorship: Finding Community and Support in Your Workplace
- Workforce Development Strategies to Attract, Develop, and Retain Talent
- Building Allyship and Earning Buy-In from Male Colleagues and Leaders

IEC Chapter Staff Community

- Member Engagement and Retention: Strategies for chapters to keep members engaged through tactical approaches and creating community
- Recruitment: Strategies for targeting and attracting apprentices effectively, strategies to retain employees
- Financial Management: Fundraising, sponsorship agreements, and financial reporting
- Advocacy: Legislative outreach, campaigning, how to advocate at a local and state level
- Marketing and Branding: chapter visibility in the community, social media trends
- Building Strong Teams: training programs, leadership development, volunteering
- Event Planning for Chapters: budgeting, logistics, marketing, and attracting new members
- Technology: CRM tools, digital platforms, and operations
- Membership Growth: recruiting new members, growing your chapter, merit shop voice

Additional Themes

IEC leadership has aligned with four key priorities to unite the organization and advance the merit shop electrical contracting industry. When submitting your proposal, please consider which of the following themes your content aligns with:

- Workforce Development
- Apprenticeship Program



- Professional Development
- Government Affairs
- Membership and IEC Community

Learning Formats

Learning formats support a range of instructional methods that give attendees more control over setting priorities and choosing the right content, materials, and methods that match their learning styles and objectives. The online form will ask you to check all the session format options that your session could fit into.

- **Learning Lab** (60 minutes): A formal presentation usually given by 1 or 2 content leaders.
- **Panel Discussion** (60- 90 minutes): Unscripted conversation and analysis with one moderator and 2/3 speakers with varied backgrounds
- **Debate** (45 minutes): Two experts presenting competing thesis on a topic followed by time for structure refutation
- **Fireside Chats** (20-30 minutes): An informal, conversational session led by 1 or 2 leaders. These sessions are designed to offer candid insights and real-world perspectives from industry leaders and subject-matter experts. Rather than formal presentations or slide decks, this format encourages open dialogue, storytelling, and authentic discussion around topics, challenges, and lessons learned.

Proposal Process & Selection Criteria

The Events Advisory Committee (EAC) seeks innovative ideas and subject matter experts to deliver cutting-edge content to attendees. Proposals submitted by IEC members and individuals within the IEC community will receive priority consideration. In 2026, IEC aims to increase engagement by encouraging submissions from dedicated volunteers and active leaders within the community.

Questions

If you have any questions, please reach out at any time.

Kari Messenger, CMP, Director of
Events, IEC National

kmessenger@ieci.org



DO NOT INCLUDE SPEAKER NAMES in the session title or description. IEC strives to conduct a fair review process that limits biases. Do not include any reference to a speaker name within the session title or description of the session. Proposals that fail to do this will be evaluated accordingly.

Please do not submit Keynote proposals. This Call is for Learning sessions only that will be presented in one of the formats listed above.

All proposals must be submitted using the online form, no exceptions. Think quality over quantity. You can submit two proposals. Upon submitting a proposal, you will receive automatic confirmation for your records if it is submitted successfully.

Limit to one engagement. IEC seeks to ensure diversity of thought, and each content leader will be limited to speaking at one session only. If education sessions are accepted that feature the same speaker(s), he/she/they will be asked to select **ONLY ONE** session to participate in. Similarly, please note that if an additional speaker is to be added to the program later, you must confirm with IEC if he/she/they are approved to speak before confirming that individual. (IEC will confirm if they are already on the program, and if so, IEC will advise that a different co-presenter will be needed).

Use clear, error-free language. Proposals require clear and concise titles (limit 10 words), persuasive outcomes-focused descriptions (limit 150 words), and three action-oriented and well-thought-out learning objectives/takeaways that answer the prompt “after this, participants will be able to...”. IEC retains the right to modify titles and descriptions during copy editing for marketing purposes.

Avoid all commercial bias. Sessions perceived by attendees as commercially biased in content (including use of client examples or proprietary tools/models) are unacceptable. Any submission that is not educational in nature, neutral and unbiased, and replicable by attendees without the author’s assistance, free of commercial motive/intent will not be accepted. If accepted, those in violation of this policy may forfeit future speaking opportunities.

