Unlocking the Power of Place
May 4-6, 2027 | Atlanta, GA
Calvin Smyre Conference Center
www.spresummit.org

Call for Session Proposals – Guidelines
Submission Deadline: November 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM EST

Join Us in Atlanta
The SPRE Summit brings together the practitioners, funders, organizers, and community leaders building shared space that strengthens place and solves real community challenges. We're now accepting session proposals for the 2027 Summit, and we want to hear from you.

This is a peer-to-peer gathering. The best sessions come from people doing the work, sharing what they've learned with others walking the same path.

What We're Looking For
Attendees want proven and innovative ways that shared space and social purpose real estate are strengthening communities. The strongest submissions blend big ideas, specific strategies, actionable tactics, and audience engagement. We're especially drawn to proposals that get honest about what's hard, share tangible models that others can adapt, and leave attendees with something they can use back home.

Key Dates
- Call for Speakers opens: September 1, 2026
- Submission deadline: November 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM EST
- Notifications sent: January 2027
- SPRE Summit: May 4-6, 2027 in Atlanta, Georgia
- Sessions take place in Atlanta on May 5 and May 6, 2027 – must be available either day

Requirements for Session Proposals
We'll have approximately 35 session spots, so we're looking for proposals that meet the following requirements:
- **Session Length:** All sessions will be 90 minutes.
- **Speakers:** Please include a maximum of four speakers per session, including the facilitator/moderator.
- **Proposal Limit Per Organization:** Please limit proposals to no more than two per organization. Joint proposals from multiple organizations are still subject to the per-organization limit.
- **Session Combinations:** We may ask session proposals to combine efforts if the content is similar, particularly when a proposal includes two or fewer presenters.

What You'll Be Asked to Submit
Have these ready before you start the form:

- A proposed session title
- Your primary theme, session format, level, and presentation style – each described below
- How your session advances social purpose real estate
- Your learning objectives and your plan for engaging the audience
- A full session description of 250 words or less
- Speaker details, including optional race and ethnicity information, and a short biography for each presenter

Sessions with more than one speaker are preferred. Maximum of four presenters for a session. You'll add each co-presenter's information in the form.

Choosing Your Theme
Every proposal is submitted under a single primary theme. Read the descriptions below to find your fit. The "especially interested in" notes aren't requirements – they're just a hint at what we'd love to see more of. Your session doesn't have to hit that specific note to be a great fit for the theme.

- **Access to Capital –** Sessions on CDFI financing, catalytic capital structures, and public-private funding tools that make mission-driven real estate financially viable. This theme takes on one of the most persistent barriers facing community developers in underinvested markets. ***We're especially interested in sessions that demystify deal structures, walk through real capital stacks, and help practitioners find their way to funding that fits.***
- **Community Ownership and Wealth Building –** Sessions focused on developing and sustaining community land trusts, multi-tenant nonprofit centers, and shared commercial spaces as long-term anchors of neighborhood economic stability. This theme surfaces replicable models, peer connections, and actionable strategies for community-controlled real estate development. ***We're especially interested in sessions that share hard-won lessons from real projects, including what didn't work, and models other communities can adapt.***
- **Development and Operation of Social Purpose Real Estate –** Sessions covering the full lifecycle of mission-driven projects, from site acquisition and community-centered design to construction, property management, tenant relations, and long-term stewardship. This theme digs into inclusive design principles, sustainable operations, and the day-to-day realities of running spaces that serve the community without losing sight of financial durability. Think practical frameworks for taking projects from concept through occupancy and beyond. ***We're especially interested in sessions that get concrete about the messy middle of development and operations, the decisions and tradeoffs that rarely make it into the polished case study.***
- **Partnerships and Collaboration –** Sessions on building the cross-sector relationships that make social purpose real estate possible, connecting nonprofit developers, community organizations, funders, public agencies, and private partners around shared goals. This theme centers interdisciplinary models where no single actor carries the full weight, reflecting CSN's belief that we complete the ecosystem rather than compete within it. Think of strategies for forming durable coalitions, aligning mission across partners, and turning

collaboration into lasting neighborhood impact. ***We're especially interested in sessions co-led by cross-sector partners who can speak candidly about what it took to build and sustain the relationship.***

- **Policy and Advocacy –** Sessions connecting local practitioners to state and federal legislation, zoning reform strategies, and community reinvestment frameworks shaping what is possible on the ground. This theme equips practitioners to advocate effectively for the policy conditions that support community economic development. ***We're especially interested in sessions that turn policy into practice, from winning zoning fights to organizing around reinvestment, with tactics attendees can use back home.***

Choosing Your Session Format

Every proposal also selects a session format, so attendees know how the session will be structured. We encourage sessions that are interactive and include time for discussion and questions.

- **Panel Presentation –** A structured discussion, typically guided by a moderator, with 20-30 minutes built in for audience Q&A. Maximum of four presenters total, including the moderator.
- **Workshop –** An interactive session focused on collaborative learning, skill-building, or generating new ideas through hands-on activities and discussion. Typically has 2-3 facilitators and no panel component.
- **Other –** Have a different format in mind? Select "Other" and tell us about it in your submission.

Choosing Your Session Level

Every proposal also specifies an experience level, so attendees can find sessions that match where they're starting from.

- **Beginner –** For attendees new to this topic or looking for a refresher on the fundamentals.
- **Intermediate –** For attendees with some hands-on experience, ready to go deeper.
- **Advanced –** For seasoned practitioners tackling the field's most complex challenges.

Choosing Your Presentation Style

Every proposal also specifies a presentation style, so attendees know what kind of experience to expect.

- **Inspirational –** Big-picture stories, vision, and case studies that spark new ways of thinking about what's possible.
- **Tactical/Lessons Learned –** Hands-on sessions grounded in real projects and case studies, including what didn't go as planned.
- **Innovations in SPRE –** New models, tools, or approaches pushing the field in new directions.

Suggestions for Developing a Strong Proposal

To increase your chances of being selected, we suggest that you:

- Share practical information attendees can act on in their own work.
- Share "lessons learned" – attendees are especially interested in what didn't go as planned, not just what succeeded.

- Focus on impact, not just description: what changed, what would you do differently, and what makes your approach innovative.
- Go in-depth rather than staying broad and skimming the surface.
- Consider the diversity of your presenters – race, ethnicity, gender – and the institutions they represent.
- Build in real interaction: small-group discussion, structured networking, problem-solving, or a hands-on skills training.
- Include presenters from two or more organizations when you can; cross-sector collaboration brings different perspectives.
- Skip the sales pitch. We're not looking for sessions built around promoting a particular product, service, or firm.
- Avoid exclusionary jargon. Define key terms so your content lands across different levels of experience.

How Proposals Are Reviewed

Our review committee, CSN and the SPRE Summit Working Group, reads every proposal against a consistent set of criteria: relevance to the theme and to the field, clarity and practicality of what attendees will take away, a plan for genuine audience engagement, and the range of voices and experiences represented across the full program. We build a program that reflects the diversity of the communities this work serves, so first-time speakers and practitioners closest to the ground are strongly encouraged to submit.

If Your Proposal Is Selected

Here's what to know if you're selected:

- **Conference Registration:** CSN will reduce your registration cost to $395 USD. Scholarships are available. Please note that CSN does not provide travel support. You are responsible for your own travel and accommodations to attend the Summit in Atlanta.
- **Session Scheduling:** CSN determines the scheduling of all sessions. Sessions will take place in-person in Atlanta, GA on May 5 or May 6, 2027, so please plan to be available either day.
- **Speaker Training:** All presenters will be required to attend a virtual training facilitated by CSN a few weeks before the Summit.
- **PowerPoint:** If your session includes a PowerPoint presentation, it must be available in both PDF and Microsoft PowerPoint with 4:3 standard slide sizing. We recommend no more than 30-35 slides total across all presenters.

Questions? Reach out to Heather Malveaux at heather@communityspaces.org with any questions about the process or proposals.

Download Sample Proposal Form

Submit Proposal