



SUBMITTING A FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Deadline:

Proposals must be electronically submitted **through our online submission system no later than March 16, 2026, 11:59 PM Pacific**. Before this deadline, submissions can be created, modified, and finalized through our Whova submission platform. All proposals need to be “submitted” in the system by the deadline to be considered, but applicants can access the system and modify their submitted proposals up until the deadline.

Description:

Facilitated discussions are 90-minute sessions that aim to elicit opinions and capitalize on the expertise of attendees on a particular topic. Though the primary purpose is not to inform attendees, up to 30 minutes of introductory content may be included, if necessary, to orient the attendees. The session’s purpose may be to build consensus, gather information that will inform future public health planning or program development, encourage networking, advance research objectives, etc. The format can be roundtable, focus group, town hall, world café, or other formats you describe in your proposal.

The session **MUST** provide one or more skilled facilitators. Organizers may invite attendees whose expertise is particularly relevant, but sessions will be **OPEN** to all conference registrants.

Before submitting a facilitated discussion proposal, please review other submission types to see whether they might be more appropriate. All session types can provide time for the audience discussion. If your objective is to inform conference attendees about a project, program, or science topic, consider another submission type. We plan to accept only one or two facilitated discussions.

Note: Attendees do not register for breakout sessions in advance; seating is on a first come, first-serve basis.

Submitting implies that you, your co-authors, and co-presenters understand and agree with the below provisions:

- Each presenter (including facilitators/moderators) will need to register for the conference.
- Communications and announcements will be e-mailed only to the identified Main Speaker, who is responsible for forwarding them to others on the team.
- Proposals must be submitted in English only.
- Promotion of a for-profit venture is not appropriate as a facilitated discussion and should instead be featured using exhibitor or sponsorship options.

Proposals must include the following:

- Descriptive title (200 characters or less)
- Name and contact information for all session leaders (presenters and facilitators). We require at least two session leaders.
- A concise biography (250 words or less) for each presenter (including facilitators and moderators). It should include relevant information on the skills, expertise, and experience needed *for the specific role they will have in this session*. It should include the presenter’s name and relevant academic preparation, publications, work and life experience, and skills.
- A brief description of the proposed session (100 words or less) for the conference agenda. This should help registrants decide whether to attend your session. It should include a brief description of the topic, format, purpose, and intended audience.



- Purpose of the facilitated discussion (100 words or less). What do the organizers expect to gain by holding this session?
- Justification for a 90-minute session (200 words or less), for example:
 - Why is this topic important to MCH practice and attendees at this conference?
 - Who is your intended audience (i.e., whose expertise is sought, and why is this conference a place to find that audience)?
 - What might attendees gain?
- Proposed format and requested room configuration (100 words or less). The standard room configuration is “classroom.” The conference MAY be able to accommodate other configurations (i.e., round tables, chairs in a circle).

Note: The conference supplies laptop, projector, and screen by default, and can provide flip charts, Wi-Fi, and an open wall for a sticky note background sheet on request for facilitated discussion sessions.

- Proposed session agenda (500 words or less)
 - For each time block, list the activity, objective, facilitator name, and time allotted
 - Describe introductory content, if applicable (30 minutes or less)
 - Include planned discussion questions or prompts
- References (200 words or less)
 - Citations and/or links for any sources of material to be presented. Please do not duplicate citations that appear in the biographical sketches.

Tips when submitting a proposal:

- Define abbreviations and acronyms at first use.
- Use numerals to indicate numbers except at the beginning of the sentence.
- Do NOT copy and paste bulleted lists from Word into your submission.
- Do NOT include graphs, tables, pictures, or attachments.

Acceptance Criteria:

Facilitated Discussions will be scored by three independent reviewers based upon:

- Clarity, conciseness, and completeness of the submission.
- Timeliness and importance of the topic for MCH, with a preference for local public health practice.
- Quality of the agenda, evidence of thorough planning, and practicality of the format.
- Qualifications of panelists and facilitators (reviewers will see names and biosketches).
- Justification that the expertise of panelists and conference attendees is appropriate for filling the gap described.

If you have questions, feel free to contact us at CitymatchConference@unmc.edu.