

Horizons 2027 Request for Session Proposals

Event Details

Dates: Tuesday, June 15–Wednesday, June 16, 2027
Location: Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Philadelphia, PA
Submission deadline: December 21, 2026
Proposal acceptance or decline: February 5, 2027

About Jobs for the Future

Jobs for the Future (JFF) is a national nonprofit that transforms U.S. education and workforce systems to drive economic success for people, businesses, and communities. JFF designs solutions, scales best practices, influences policy and action, and invests in innovation. JFF's North Star is that by 2033, 75 million Americans facing barriers to economic advancement will have access to quality jobs.

About Horizons

Horizons Summit is JFF's flagship event, convening 2,000 leaders across employers, investors, government, education, philanthropy, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and community organizations to exchange ideas, build connections, and advance solutions that expand pathways to quality jobs and economic opportunity.

Horizons is a welcoming, nonpartisan space grounded in collaboration and action. The summit showcases our shared dedication to economic success for people, businesses, and communities.

RFP Guidelines

For 2027, Horizons is seeking a limited number of breakout sessions that help attendees understand what is changing in the field, connect across roles and sectors, and leave with practical ideas they can apply in their own organizations and communities.

Horizons 2027 content will be organized by tracks and tags. Each proposal should identify one track and up to four tags that best reflect the session's primary focus and attendee takeaways.



Criteria:

Strong proposals will:

- Make a clear case for why the topic matters now.
- Address a specific challenge, opportunity, or decision affecting learning, work, or economic advancement.
- Explain how changing conditions and emerging trends are shaping the learning and work ecosystem, and what participants should understand, question, decide, or do differently.
- Feature perspectives from people doing and/or experiencing the work.
- Bring together diverse perspectives or demonstrate meaningful cross-sector collaboration.
- Include voices from the audience being discussed, if relevant (for example, submissions on topics involving young workers should include a young worker).
- Share evidence, lessons learned, implementation experience, practical tools, and examples.
- Create an engaging experience for attendees rather than relying solely on a series of presentations or prepared remarks.
- Connect to JFF's North Star: By 2033, 75 million Americans facing barriers to economic advancement will have quality jobs.

Horizons is not seeking sessions that:

- Function primarily as product demonstrations, sales presentations, or organizational promotion.
- Offer broad commentary without a clear point of view, evidence, examples, or actionable takeaways.
- Center one organization's work without explaining what others can learn, question, or adapt.
- Depend on a speaker who has not been contacted or is not realistically available to participate.

JFF may edit, combine, reframe, or redirect proposals to strengthen the overall program. Similar proposals may be invited to collaborate.



Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed for:

1. Track fit and clarity of the session concept
2. Value to Horizons attendees across roles and sectors
3. Distinctiveness, timeliness, and contribution to a balanced program
4. Credibility through evidence, implementation experience, lived experience, or a clearly articulated emerging approach
5. Meaningful representation of practitioner, worker, learner, community, or other relevant perspectives
6. A well-designed, highly interactive experience
7. Potential to advance practical conversations about quality jobs and economic opportunity

Session Formats

We welcome proposals for a range of formats. All breakouts are 60 or 75 minutes long. The final duration and schedule are determined by the Horizons team. Sessions will start and end at their scheduled times and should allow time for audience questions.

Possible formats include:

- Book talk - *Moderated author interview. Please submit book talk proposals only for books that will be available for public purchase by June 2027. As part of the proposal review process, JFF may request an excerpt, an advance reader's copy, or a copy of the book.*
- Case study - *Facilitator-led, data-driven discussion of an implemented project.*
- Fireside chat - *Informal but structured interview with one speaker and a moderator.*
- Implementation session - *Facilitator-led discussion focused on translating high-level goals into actionable strategies.*
- Moderated panel with structured audience participation - *Moderated conversation with no more than 4 participants, including the moderator, with planned time for audience Q&A.*
- Roundtable or facilitated peer exchange - *Facilitated peer-to-peer conversations led by a moderator and/or subject matter expert(s).*

Please design the session with an interactive attendee experience in mind and include time for audience questions.



Participation and Logistics

- All proposed speakers must be available to participate in person in Philadelphia on June 15–16, 2027.
- All speakers must register for the Horizons Summit. All accepted speakers will receive a discounted registration rate and registration instructions when registration opens in early 2027.
- Sessions may include no more than four speakers, including the moderator.
- Attendance may range from approximately 20 to 100+ participants per session.
- Room assignments and setups are not guaranteed.
- Breakout rooms will not have PowerPoint presentation capabilities. Standard room setup will include a head table with chairs and handheld microphones. Additional furniture, staging, or A/V requests cannot be guaranteed.
- Session leaders are responsible for uploading any materials or handouts to the Horizons speaker resource center or for printing and bringing them onsite. The Horizons team cannot support printing.
- Breakout sessions will not be recorded.
- Submission does not guarantee selection, preferred session date, time, length, room assignment, or a speaking role for every person listed.
- Selection does not include registration, travel, lodging, or an honorarium.
- Session leaders must meet deadlines for speaker confirmations, biographies, accessibility information, and other program needs.
- The Horizons team may request revisions to titles, descriptions, speakers, or format before publication.



Horizons 2027 Session Tracks

There are eight tracks. Submitters must select one primary track per proposal. Use the descriptions and questions below to identify the best fit.

Track	Description	Sample Tags
AI & the Future of Work	Understanding how AI and emerging technologies reshaping work, learning, skills, and talent systems, and how leaders can adopt them responsibly to expand opportunity, strengthen human capacity, protect worker agency, and support quality jobs.	AI and the Labor Market; AI in Education; AI and Workforce Systems; Emerging Technology; Human-Centered AI; Responsible AI Adoption
Apprenticeships & Work-based Learning	Building and scaling high-quality pathways that connect people to paid learning, real work experience, supportive guidance, and advancement into quality jobs. Explore how employers, educators, labor, and communities can make work-based learning more accessible and effective.	Employer Partnerships; Labor Partnerships; Service-to-Career; Skilled Trades; Youth and Early-Career Talent; Worker Voice; Learner Voice
Career Navigation & Skills	Helping people make informed choices about education, training, and work, and ensuring their skills are visible, valued, and connected to quality jobs and advancement.	Career Navigation; Skills-Based Hiring; Human Skills; Career Coaching; Quality Jobs
Fair Chance	Expanding access to education, training, quality jobs, and economic opportunity for people impacted by incarceration or the criminal justice system.	Fair Chance Hiring; Incarceration and Reentry; Justice-Impacted Learners; Worker Voice; Employer Practices; Learner Voice
Innovation & Investment	Examining new models, partnerships, financing, entrepreneurship, and investment strategies that can move promising ideas from experimentation to scale. Focus on how capital, collaboration, and responsible risk-taking can expand impact and build stronger pathways to quality jobs.	Entrepreneurship and Startup Innovation; Impact Investing; Philanthropic Funding; Outcomes-Based Financing; Employer Partnerships; Regional Partnerships
Policy & Practice	Connecting research, policy, and implementation to strengthen education and workforce systems and improve outcomes for people, employers, and communities.	Federal Policy; State and Local Policy; Education and Workforce Alignment; Workforce System Change; Employer Practices; Labor Partnerships; Quality Jobs; Data and Evidence
Postsecondary Pathways	Reimagining higher education and training pathways so more people can access, complete, and benefit from credentials of value and programs that lead to quality jobs.	Community Colleges; Adult and Working Learners; Dual Enrollment; Alternative and Short-Term Credentials; Credentials of Value; Higher Education Innovation; K-12 to Career; Learner Voice
States in Action	Showcasing how state, local, and regional leadership are turning policy into practice, strengthening public workforce systems, and building partnerships that expand access to quality jobs and economic opportunity. Highlight what is working, what is being learned, and what others can adapt.	State and Local Policy; Policy Implementation; Public Workforce Systems; Regional Partnerships; Skilled Trades; Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic

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June 15-16, 2027 | Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

Horizons 2027 Session Tags

Tags are descriptors that help the Horizons team organize and promote content. Select up to four. The final tag list may be adjusted as the program develops.

- Adult and Working Learners
- AI and the Labor Market
- AI and Workforce Systems
- AI in Education
- Alternative and Short-Term Credentials
- Apprenticeship
- Career Coaching
- Career Navigation
- Community Colleges
- Credentials of Value
- Data and Evidence
- Dual Enrollment
- Education and Workforce Alignment
- Emerging Technology
- Employer Partnerships
- Employer Practices
- Entrepreneurship and Startup Innovation
- Fair Chance Hiring
- Federal Policy
- Higher Education Innovation
- Human Skills
- Human-Centered AI
- Impact Investing
- Incarceration and Reentry
- Justice-Impacted Learners
- K-12 to Career
- Labor Partnerships
- Learner Voice
- Outcomes-Based Financing
- Pennsylvania and Mid-Atlantic
- Philanthropic Funding
- Policy Implementation
- Public Workforce Systems
- Quality Jobs
- Regional Partnerships
- Responsible AI Adoption
- Service-to-Career
- Skilled Trades
- Skills-Based Hiring
- State and Local Policy
- Workforce System Change
- Work-Based Learning
- Worker Voice
- Youth and Early-Career Talent

Guiding Questions for Developing a Proposal

Before submitting your session proposal, consider:

- Why does this conversation matter now?
- Who is this session designed for, and what will make it relevant to that audience?
- What specific challenge, opportunity, or issue will the session explore?
- What real examples, evidence, lessons, or experiences will make the session credible and useful?
- How will attendees actively engage with the content, speakers, and one another?
- What should attendees understand, reconsider, or be equipped to do differently as a result of the session?



Timeline

- Request for Proposals opens: November 2, 2026
- Proposals due: December 21, 2026
- Proposal acceptance or decline: February 5, 2027
- Session details and speakers finalized: March 1, 2027
- Horizons 2027: June 15–16, 2027

Questions

Contact horizons@jff.org. For the most up-to-date information about the Horizons Summit, go to horizons.jff.org.