FAQ

Who attends this event?

Typical attendance is 600+ people. The audience for the Symposium is comprised of about 65% nonprofit staff, typically CFOs, Controllers and other accounting staff. The remaining 35% of our attendees are staff of public accounting firms who specialize in the nonprofit industry, service providers and government employees. Our nonprofit registrants come mostly from a balance of c3 and c6 organizations. Approximately 1/3 of our nonprofit attendees have annual budgets of $1-10MM, 40% from $10-50MM and another 1/3 over $50MM. 90% of attendees are from the DC metro area.

What kinds of topics are you looking for?

Each year we offer a wide variety of sessions in accounting, auditing, tax compliance and management topics. Given the broad range of areas that our attendees often are responsible for, we also do incorporate technology innovations, and HR and other management/leadership topics into the program. Our audience is sophisticated and expects intermediate or advanced level sessions on all topics. **This is not the place for a beginner level course.** In addition to necessary updates and topics of perennial interest, this year's planning will be working on sessions related to the impact of the new Administration's various actions on the sector.

What kinds of speakers are you looking for?

The Symposium audience has high expectations of our speakers. This is not the venue for an inexperienced presenter to go it alone, though we do encourage experienced presenters to incorporate varied perspectives including by partnering with industry clients or other experts if warranted. If submissions do not include evidence of past professional speaking success, they are unlikely to be selected *unless* there is a corresponding video clip attached demonstrating presentation competence. The audience appreciates speakers who are confident in front of a large group, have command of the issue, and who engage the audience effectively through managing group interaction, polling, breakouts or otherwise. For sessions which will be virtual, of particular importance will be demonstrated success in presenting virtually.

Sessions which include the direct experiences of those in industry are highly valued, as are interactive sessions which go beyond an overview, to provide in-depth analysis, guidance on implementation of complicated standards or hands-on practical tips. Attendees particularly like when they can hear from both a practitioner and a client who have teamed up to present a case study, or from a panel of nonprofit staff sharing their experiences. The nonprofit sector is diverse and our attendees appreciate when diversity is represented in both the professional experiences and the demographics of our speakers.

What session formats work well?

This year's conference is a mix of virtual and in person sessions, but with the majority being in person breakout sessions for an audience of 100-200. We divide sessions into mostly 50 min and

75 min time slots. Speakers who involve the audience in their session through relevant live polling and Q & A get a better response. Long and detailed PPTs can be nice reference materials, but deviating from slides with examples and storytelling keeps their attention better. **Please do not submit if your presentation style is typically to read from your slides.**

Can I submit more than one session idea?
Yes. You may submit as many session ideas as you like. However, no company is likely to get more than two different sessions onto the program.

Can I submit for a general session/keynote?

You can, but keynote presentations are typically by invitation of the GWSCPA Symposium Planning Committee.

Does the GWSCPA pay Symposium speakers?

We do not pay speakers for breakout sessions at the Symposium. Speakers do receive a deeply discounted rate of registration for the full conference, if they desire to stay and receive CPE credit. We do not reimburse travel expenses for breakout session speakers.

What if I am not selected?

This process is competitive and every year we receive more submissions than we have available sessions. GWSCPA will notify all submissions of their status. If you are not selected, we will keep your submission on file for a year and may contact you to present in a different venue (our monthly Nonprofit Section meetings or another conference, for example.)

What are the next steps if I do get selected?
The Planning Committee anticipates notifying all selected speakers by June 30, 2025. At that time, you will receive a speaker agreement and additional due dates for slides and your preview article about your session for our marketing efforts. You will also schedule a time for a prep call with someone from the Planning Committee over the summer to prepare you for the event. All presenters must participate in a prep call. If you have any additional question about the process or what the planning committee is looking for before you submit, please contact Kari Bedell at kbedell@gwscpa.org.