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Call for Proposals for CCMA 2023

CCMA 2023 will take place June 8-10, 2023, in Sacramento, California. The University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives seeks proposals for breakout sessions for CCMA 2023 through **Friday, March 3, 2023**. Please read this document carefully before submitting your proposal. We look forward to reading your proposals!

2023 THEME: COOPERATIVE VITALITY: RECONNECTION AND RESILIENCE

As CCMA returns to Sacramento after nearly 30 years, we honor and reflect upon its nickname, “City of Trees.” Sacramento’s tree canopy is thick with elms, oaks, sycamores, and hundreds more species that together cover nearly a quarter of the urban landscape. Trees are critical to the health of our planet and an indispensable part of mitigating climate change and biodiversity collapse. Forest ecosystems are regenerative, and they work in harmony. Trees reach for the sun, harnessing solar energy. Below, the ground teems with unseen fungal networks, breaking down forest floor debris.

For the last century, the cooperative movement has used the twin pines emblem to symbolize the power and promise of cooperation. The pine tree is an ancient symbol of endurance. The two trees together represent the strength in mutual cooperation—people helping people. Deeply rooted local institutions, such as our cooperatives, are an essential element of thriving, diverse communities. CCMA 2023 will shed light on the many ways cooperatives, like forests, foster connection, regeneration, and community vitality.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONFERENCE AND AUDIENCE

CCMA is an annual three-day, national gathering of food cooperative leaders. The conference typically has 350-450 attendees that include co-op management, staff, board members and consultants.

Previous CCMA had the average breakdown of attendee roles:

- Co-op directors – 45%
- Co-op GMs, CEOs, CFOs, and department managers – 28%
- Co-op support professionals such as consultants, attorneys, accountants – 17%
- Co-o staff – 10%

The conference features two general plenary sessions and 25 breakout sessions, receptions and networking, co-op tours, and a closing night party. We will use the WHOVA app again this year to help in person attendees to connect and network around topics of interest.

FORMAT

Each breakout session is part of a track. Breakout sessions are 90 minutes in length and can be delivered in the format of your choice: presentation session, teaching session, workshop, or lightning talk. We use the following definitions and room set ups:

Presentation Session: Innovative, challenging, topic of interest to an audience. One to three presenters each present material related to the theme of the session. Following the presentations there are at least 15-20 minutes of Q&A. Standard room set: head table & lectern for presenters, chairs in rows for attendees.

Teaching Session: consists of one or two experts with a how-to approach to the stated subject matter. Standard room set up: chairs set at round tables for attendees.

Workshop: A workshop provides an opportunity to exchange information or work on a common problem, project, or shared interest. Presentations are brief, allowing adequate time for reflective discussion and interaction. Didactic presentations are limited and learning by doing occupies most of the session. Standard room set up: chairs set at round tables for attendees.

Lightning Talk: A lightning talk is a very short talk (5-7minutes), where you share an idea or innovation that you are implementing at your co-op. Lightning talks will be held during the Innovation Sprint! CCMA Lightning Talks breakout session. There is a limit of seven speakers, with discussion breaks for attendees to ask questions, share their opinions, etc. As a speaker for one of these sessions, you will receive a discount on conference registration.

All presentations must be done in person.

At this time, we will only accept proposals for in person presentations.

TIMELINE:

- January 11, 2023: Call for Proposals opens.
- March 3, 2023: Call for Proposals closes.
- March 31, 2023: UWCC staff will notify all applicants of their proposal status via email.

BREAKOUT SESSION TRACKS

CCMA 2023 will feature five tracks:

Track 1: The Foundations of Grocery Greatness – This track is designed for attendees who may be new to cooperatives or the retail grocery industry. Topics may include pricing strategies; operational best practices; merchandizing fundamentals; product mix; strategies for documenting systems and practices; prepared foods; etc.

Track 2: Being a Great Employer – creating equitable and sustainable jobs; attracting and retaining staff; developing a culture of equity and inclusion; improving internal communication; developing a leadership pipeline; open book management; effective meetings for departments; building a strong workplace culture; etc.

Track 3: Members: The Roots of the Co-op – improving the member experience; engaging current and future members; authentic connections with the local community; stories of mutual aid in action; co-op education programs; demonstrating impact and the cooperative difference; using community organizing tools to foster democracy; accessibility programs; welcoming diverse populations from all ages, classes, abilities, genders, religious affiliations, and sexual orientations; etc.

Track 4: Growing Resilient Boards – cultivating a healthy board culture; building a diverse and inclusive board; board development and succession strategies; the role of the board in strategic planning; board self-evaluation; policy governance; board communication strategies; developing an effective board-management relationship; financial literacy and monitoring; updating governance for a new era: processes, technology, revision of bylaws; etc.

Track 5: Strategies to Compete – trends in the competitive retail market; strategic partnerships and co-op to co-op trade; supply chain challenges; investment and finance strategies for growth; increasing access to healthy food; expansion best practices; tools for driving sustainable growth; sustainability; leveraging technology to improve your co-op; etc.

Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

In order to survive and thrive, it is critical that food cooperatives welcome and lift up diverse voices and engage in the deep work of addressing systemic racism and oppression. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices must be core to the work and identity of our cooperative community. In the past, the CCMA Planning Committee has dedicated a specific track to addressing DEI initiatives. This year we ask that all applications address relevant diversity, equity, and inclusion activities related to their proposed topic. We need to work on diversifying voices in our board rooms, removing implicit bias from our hiring practices, measuring our product procurement from BIPOC farmers, etc. The goal of this change in programming is to embed DEI thought and action into all CCMA breakout sessions.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All proposals for CCMA 2023 must be [submitted online here](#). Proposals are due by 11:59 pm CT on Friday, March 3, 2022.

Session Proposal Guidelines:

1. Session title and description (300-500 words)
2. Target audience (board members, co-op staff, managers, etc.)
3. Session format (e.g., presentation, teaching session, workshop, lightning talk)
4. Three active learning outcomes that the attendee can expect to take away from the presentation and apply to their co-op or job/role
5. Describe how your session will address diversity regard race, class, gender, or other communities.
6. Name, title, organization, email, phone number, and mailing address for all presenters (only include confirmed presenters¹).
7. If a panel, contact information for each proposed panelist

If selected, your name, photo, biography, presentation title, session description, and learning objectives will be made available on the CCMA conference website. Conference attendees will receive your presentation in PDF format via a link to Dropbox.

SELECTION CRITERIA & PROCESS

To ensure full and fair consideration, proposals will be evaluated and selected by the CCMA Planning Committee according to the following criteria:

- Relevance – directly addresses the conference theme and selected topic track.
- Clarity – offers a clear description of the proposed session and learning objectives.
- Innovation – displays innovations or originality.
- Application – participants will be able to learn practical tools or lessons.
- Format – co-op case studies and interactive workshops will be given preference.
- Program balance – the conference planning committee strives to create a balanced program covering a wide range of topics with diverse presenters.

Co-op Case Studies: We encourage co-ops to share their successes, failures, and lessons learned with their peers. Technical assistance providers are encouraged to partner with co-op presenters to develop proposals.

Selection Process: The CCMA Planning Committee selects a Proposal Review Committee to review CCMA breakout session proposals. UWCC will ensure that each proposal received is reviewed by at least four members of the Proposal Review Committee. Each reviewer will score each proposal against the criteria listed above on a 4-point scale (1 = poor, 2 = acceptable, 3 = very good, 4 = excellent). UWCC will collect all scores and take the average score of all four reviewers. Next UWCC staff will develop a draft breakout session matrix with proposed sessions for each track and identify any topics that are missing from the track. Lastly, the full CCMA planning committee will review, make suggestions, and approve the final breakout sessions for the conference. **Applicants will be notified of selection decisions after March 31, 2023.**

Other Information

Participation as a presenter in CCMA 2023 is voluntary. In recognition of a presenter's contribution of time and effort, selected presentations will be given complimentary conference admission for up to two (2) presenters per session. If a session has more than two presenters, each presenter will receive a 50% discount on the registration fees. Lightning session presenters will receive \$200 discount on CCMA registration. Each presenter remains responsible for his or her own expenses (travel, lodging, etc.).

QUESTIONS?

Please contact Megan Webster, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, at mawebster@wisc.edu or 608-890-1048. We look forward to receiving your proposal.

ⁱ On our application, please only include confirmed speakers or panelists. Any general positions mentioned, e.g. "co-op GM" or "co-op producer manager" will be removed before final submission to the review committee.