Call for Presenters – Breakout Sessions

We are seeking experienced leaders, knowledge keepers, governance professionals, and subject-matter experts to facilitate engaging, practical breakout sessions designed for aspiring, current, and former First Nation community leaders.

Breakout Session Format Requirements

All breakout sessions must include:
• A structured presentation component
• 3–5 clear key takeaways for participants
• A minimum 15-minute Q&A period or interactive audience engagement segment
Sessions should be practical, relevant, and solution-focused, providing participants with tools they can immediately apply in their leadership journey.

1. The Decision to Run: Understanding Your "Why"

Leadership begins long before a nomination form is signed. This session explores the deeper motivations behind seeking office, ie.: purpose, calling, readiness, and service. Presenters may address self-reflection tools, responsibility, family considerations, spiritual grounding, and assessing personal preparedness for public leadership.

2. Young Leaders & Rising Expectations

Young and emerging leaders often navigate high expectations, skepticism, and generational dynamics. This session may explore building credibility, overcoming imposter syndrome, honouring Elders while bringing fresh ideas, and developing confidence in high-pressure environments. Practical mentorship models are encouraged.

3. Leadership Wellness & Boundaries: The 24/7 Myth

Leadership should not come at the cost of your health or family. This session explores burnout prevention, emotional regulation, boundary setting with community members, social media pressures, and sustaining mental, spiritual, and physical wellness while serving.

4. Council Protocols, Meetings & Professional Conduct

Effective governance requires professionalism and procedural knowledge. Topics may include agenda preparation, motions and resolutions, confidentiality, documentation practices, respectful debate, ethical conduct, and navigating difficult meeting dynamics with clarity and composure.

5. What Leadership Looks Like in First Nations Governance

This session examines the realities of elected leadership within First Nations governance systems. Presenters may explore roles and responsibilities, traditional leadership values, the balance between community expectations and regulatory frameworks, and the evolving nature of Indigenous governance while honoring and upholding its traditional foundations.

6. Campaign Foundations: From Vision to Action

A successful campaign requires preparation, organization, and clarity. Presenters may cover developing a platform which focuses on community priorities, organizing volunteers, building messaging, managing timelines, fundraising basics, and preparing for election day.

7. Governance, Accountability & Transparency

Trust is foundational to leadership. This session may explore ethical decision-making frameworks, financial oversight responsibilities, reporting practices, documentation standards, conflict of interest considerations, and building transparent systems that strengthen community confidence.

8. Managing Criticism, Conflict & Community Politics

Leadership inevitably includes disagreement, gossip, and public scrutiny. This session may focus on conflict resolution strategies, responding to criticism constructively, navigating factionalism, de-escalation skills, and maintaining professionalism under pressure.

9. Public Speaking & Leadership Communication

Strong communication builds influence, credibility, and trust. Presenters may address speech structure, storytelling, media engagement, and confidently speaking in public forums and government meetings. Topics may also include reading the room, adjusting tone and message to diverse audiences, managing high-stakes conversations, and communicating with clarity, strength, and cultural respect.

10. Legacy, Mentorship & Sustainable Leadership Pathways

Leadership is not only about the present term, it is about strengthening the future. This session explores how to build enduring systems, policies, and governance practices that remain stable and effective through leadership transitions. Presenters may address succession planning, engaging youth and Elders, mentorship models, knowledge transfer, and designing structures that outlast individual leaders. The emphasis is on building capacity and continuity so that community progress is protected and carried forward for generations to come.

11. Running an Ethical, Values-Based Campaign

Integrity during elections sets the tone for leadership. Presenters may address respectful campaigning, managing misinformation, handling opposition ethically, and upholding cultural values while maintaining community unity during competitive elections. This session may also explore the importance of understanding election policies, governance codes, and applicable legal frameworks to ensure campaigns are compliant, transparent, and accountable.

12. Unmasking Entitlement & Power Dynamics

Power can reveal both strength and shadow. This session may explore recognizing entitlement behaviors, maintaining humility in office, establishing accountability structures, addressing internal leadership conflicts, and fostering ethical use of authority.

13. Managing Leadership Stress

Leadership carries significant emotional and political weight. This session examines the pressure of high-stakes decision-making, the burden of community expectations, and the hidden toll of lateral violence and public scrutiny. Presenters may address decision fatigue, feeling overextended, the difficulty of stepping away to rest, crisis leadership demands, and developing culturally grounded resilience practices that support long-term sustainability in leadership.

14. Life After Leadership: Developing an Exit Plan

Every leadership role eventually transitions, whether is in our plan or not. This session may explore preparing financially and professionally for life beyond office, identity shifts, reintegration into community life, rebuilding purpose, and planning transitions before elections occur.

15. Council & Administration: Understanding the Distinction

Strong governance depends on role clarity at every level. This session explores the distinct responsibilities of elected leadership, administrative staff, and organizational entities within a First Nation. Presenters may address delegation, understanding that the council is not responsible for managing day-to-day operations, and recognizing the critical role administrators and department leaders play in effective governance. Emphasis should be placed on creating alignment across community, council, administration, and entities so that leadership remains strategic, operational, and systems function effectively in service of the Nation.