

WEFTEC 2026

CALL FOR CONTENT

Are you a water sector professional? Does your work have a connection with water, water availability or water quality? Then the Water Environment Federation's annual Technical and Education Conference (WEFTEC) is for you! We are excited to announce the Call for Content for this premier annual water event.

With over 20,000 attendees, from utility leaders to manufacturers, WEFTEC is your opportunity to shape the Circular Water Economy discourse and the water sector in general. WEF is seeking water sector leaders, disruptors, idea generators, problem solvers, and creative thinkers, like you.

In this packet, you'll learn all the best practices to ensure your submission complies with WEF's standards and requirements. (see page 5) WEF strives to share the latest information on water quality. Please forward this Call for Content to others in your organization who may have information to share.

If you have any questions or experience any issues, please reach out to the WEFTEC Education Team at speakers@wef.org.

THE CALL

The 2026 Call for Content consists of new submission topics. Please review all topics carefully to ensure you submit to the correct one. For an appendix of topics and themes, go to page 10.

To submit: <https://ww5.aievolution.com/wef/>



10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE SUBMITTING

1. WEF Membership is not required for submission.

Non-WEF Members are welcome and encouraged to submit to WEFTEC 2026.

2. Submissions should not be a sales pitch.

3. Submissions that reference specific equipment should list the equipment manufacturers as authors or co-authors.

4. There is no limit on the number of abstracts or proposals that can be submitted by an individual, company, organization, or institution. However, each submission should only be submitted once.

Do not submit the same or similar abstract/proposals to different topics. Duplicate abstracts/proposals will be rejected.

5. Please do not submit material that has been presented numerous times prior or will be presented prior to WEFTEC.

The goal of the Program Community is to present the newest and most relevant content to participants. The exception would be a fundamentals submission.

6. Authors of accepted submissions will be required to provide a complete technical paper by July for inclusion in the conference proceedings.

7. Accepted submissions should expect their presentations to be included in interactive technical sessions.

Speakers should note that it is likely their session will involve engagement with the audience, including but not limited to facilitated discussions, breakout groups, and panel discussions.

8. All technical session speakers, moderators, and facilitators must register as attendees for WEFTEC 2026.

Speakers, moderators, and facilitators are responsible for all travel and lodging expenses, including conference registration fees.

9. All submissions must meet the 400-word minimum and must not exceed 5,500 (abstract) or 7,000 (session proposal) characters to be considered for the technical program.

10. The official language of WEFTEC is English.

SUBMISSION TYPES

Individual Abstract

1. All abstract submissions should include an author, co-author, and a maximum of two speakers. The abstract itself cannot exceed 5,500 characters.
2. Accepted individual abstract submissions will be paired with 1-2 other individual abstract submissions to develop one technical session. Accepted abstract authors must coordinate with the other authors in their technical session.
3. Each accepted abstract will be assigned a presentation time based on the format of their session. Speakers can expect presentation time to be as short as five minutes or as long as fifteen minutes. Presentation times are shared immediately upon acceptance into the technical program.
4. Accepted abstracts can be expected to participate in an interactive activity as well to help facilitate adult learning.

Session Proposal

1. All session proposals should consist of a maximum of three speakers, two facilitators, and a complete agenda (60 to 90 minutes). Agendas must have a cohesive theme or topic with the goal of encouraging knowledge exchange or development. Proposals must incorporate attendee interaction.
2. Accepted session proposals will become a complete technical session. Proposal facilitators will coordinate with program community members to finalize the session's agenda and attendee engagement activities before WEFTEC 2026.
3. Proposal speakers and facilitators should not all represent the same utility or organization but should come from different backgrounds and experiences. This includes not having all clients from one consulting organization or manufacturer.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following fields are included in the submission process. Review the fields and any requirements provided before submitting.

Individual Abstract

Title of Presentation

- The title should be no more than 10 words. It should be short and direct.
- The title should capitalize each word. Do not use all caps.

Author(s)

- Identify any equipment manufacturers, engineers, or others involved in the project as co-authors. For example, if a specific piece of machinery was used, the manufacturer should be included as a co-author.
- Assigned speaker(s) must be either the primary author or co-author(s).

Abstract

- Minimum of 400 words, Maximum of 5,500 characters.
- Abstracts cannot include presentation title, authors, references, or keywords in the body of the abstract.
- Abstracts should clearly define the objectives, status, methodology, findings, and significance of the investigation, project, program, or study.
- Abstracts should include relevant project data and research. Do not submit a general write-up without accompanying data.

References/Sources – (*optional*) Must be separate and not included in abstract text.

Topic – Select 1 that best fits your submission.

Theme (*optional*) – Select 1 theme that best fits your submission, if relevant.

Keywords – Provide up to five.

Additional Information

Images and Tables (*optional*)

- Put excel tables into .jpg or .png format before uploading.
- Recommended: Images and tables should be no more than 650 pixels wide and 900 pixels high.
- Always check the preview tab to make sure your images are readable.

Preview (*optional*)

Finalize - Check the box on the page to submit.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Session Proposal

Title

- The title should be no more than 10 words. It should be short and direct.
- The title should capitalize each word. Do not use all caps.

Session Participants - Recommended maximums for each presenter role.

- Lead Facilitator (1)
- Assistant Facilitators (2)
- Speakers (3)

Session Overview

- Short overview of the session proposal. Think of this as marketing material for your session.

Session Description

- Should not exceed the 7,000-character limit.
- Provide the following Information:
 - a. Short Presentation Abstracts (no affiliation or names should be associated with each presentation). You can say Speaker 1 will cover X.
 - b. Tell the reviewers WHY the presentations belong together and how they build upon each other.
 - c. Describe the participant engagement activities and explain how they facilitate learning and complement the presentations.
 - d. Highlight the benefit to participants attending this session.

Learning Objectives

- Each submission should include a minimum of three learning objectives.
- Objectives should outline the knowledge attendees will gain during your session and apply within their own organizations.
- Learning objectives should never use the word “learn”.

Topic –Select 1 that best fits your submission.

Theme (*optional*) – Select 1 theme that best fits your submission, if relevant.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Session Proposal (continued)

Session Agenda

Images and Tables (*optional*)

- Put any excel tables into .jpg or .png format before uploading.
- Recommended: Images and tables should be no more than 650 pixels wide and 900 pixels high.
- Always check the preview tab to make sure your images are readable.

Preview (*optional*)

Finalize

SUBMISSION REVIEW AND SCORING CRITERIA

While using a blind review process, reviewers will score both individual abstracts and session proposals based on the following criteria. Typically, less than 50% of submissions are accepted into the technical program. Submitters should take the time to ensure all submissions meet or exceed the scoring criteria.



Applicability

The submission provides concepts, context setting, or lessons learned that are transferable/usable.

- For session proposals, this is **25%** of the score.
- For abstracts, this is **30%** of the score.



Results and Outcomes

The submission provides information supporting lessons learned and proof of concepts, lessons learned, or context.

- For session proposals, this is **30%** of the score.
- For abstracts, this is **40%** of the score.



Audience Appeal

The submission provides new concepts, ideas, hot topics, or a novel application of concept. The idea has not been presented at WEFTEC in the past.

- For session proposals, this is **25%** of the score.
- For abstracts, this is **30%** of the score.



Concept Integration & Activities

The submission walks the reviewer through the session layout, ensures cohesive participant experience, and includes meaningful points of engagement (interactive activities) that support adult learning.

- For session proposals, this is **20%** of the score.

Manufacture & Exhibitor Submission Guide

Benefits of Presenting at WEFTEC

Presenting at WEFTEC is not a sales pitch. However, it offers manufacturers a powerful platform to elevate your brand, showcase innovation, and drive business growth. Key benefits include:

- **Thought Leadership & Credibility** - Position your company as an industry leader by sharing your solutions, insights, innovations, and best practices. Gain recognition as a trusted voice in the industry.
- **Sales Enablement & Lead Generation** - Drive interest in your products and services. A strong presentation can immediately drive traffic to your WEFTEC booth, spark follow-up meetings, and new opportunities.
- **Brand Visibility & Awareness** - Amplify your brand presence among peers and potential clients. Presentations put your name front and center in a highly targeted audience.
- **Market Intelligence & Feedback** - Presenting your solutions invites real-time feedback and questions, helping refine your offerings and understand evolving market needs.
- **Talent Attraction & Recruitment** - Showcase your company culture and innovation to attract top talent who attend conferences seeking inspiring employers.

Target Submitter

- Your company's Engineering, Research and Development, Product Management, and Sales teams.
- Someone who knows how to speak about the technology and engage with an audience of academics and consultants.

Abstract Resources

[This web page](#) provides additional resources on how to write a good abstract and three examples of well-written abstracts that were previously accepted.

TIMELINE

January 15, 2026: Submission Deadline

All submissions must be finalized in the speaker portal by 9:00am EASTERN.



The review process begins immediately after the deadline. Therefore, late submissions are not accepted under any circumstances.

January – February 2026

WEFTEC Program Community will review and score all submissions.

March – April 2026

WEFTEC Program Community develops technical sessions to be held during WEFTEC 2026 using accepted submissions.

Late April – May 2026

- All submitters are notified of acceptance or rejection.
- Accepted authors must confirm participation in WEFTEC 2026.
**Session agendas should be reviewed before committing to speak. Some agendas will include engagement with attendees and shortened presentation times.*

Early July

All accepted authors must submit a full technical paper for the WEFTEC 2026 conference proceedings.

August

All authors and co-authors must submit an electronic signature for the WEF license agreement to include technical papers in the proceedings



2026 Abstract/Proposal Topics:

Asset Management, Program Development & Reliability Strategies

Asset management is essential for delivering reliable, cost-effective service and guiding long-term decisions. Submissions can come from utilities of all size, consultants, technology providers, operators, researchers, and other partners, to showcase strategies in reliability-centered maintenance, asset management program development, risk-based planning, performance tracking, and integration with capital, financial, and workforce planning. Sessions may also explore the use of emerging technologies such as predictive analytics, digital twins, and AI, and highlight scalable, practical approaches that can be adapted across diverse utility contexts.

Biogas & Energy Recovery

Anaerobic digestion and other treatment technologies offer the potential to generate valuable biogas, as well as the potential to generate or recover energy within the WRRF. Submissions should cover the range of biogas and energy recovery topics, including optimizing gas production, internal vs external reuse of biogas, innovative uses of biogas and energy recovery, and the interaction of biogas/energy recovery and federal/state energy policies.

Biosolids & Residuals

Almost all liquid treatment technologies create some form of residuals. Submissions should address aspects of biosolids and residuals, including pre-treatment, thickening, stabilization, dewatering, drying, and final disposal or beneficial reuse. Innovative treatment techniques, such as hydrolysis, phased digestion, pyrolysis, degasification are important topics to cover. The use of various technologies to treat emerging contaminants in biosolids and other residuals is also a key topic for this area.

Climate Change Adaptation, Extreme Events and Resilience

Climate change is intensifying extreme weather events, threatening human societies and ecosystems. This calls for strong adaptation strategies that build resilience and reduce impacts. Effective measures include technological innovation, resilient infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and supportive policies. By examining the links between shifting climate patterns, growing risks, and adaptive responses, this research seeks integrated solutions that promote sustainable and equitable resilience in a changing world.

Collection Systems

Collection systems have been doing their part to protect public health and safety for over 5,000 years. Submissions should highlight best practices for constructing, managing, and optimizing the operation of collection systems. This can include combined sewer system management strategies and overflow solutions. The implementation and utilization of smart water tools for modeling to identify I&I and the appropriate construction methods to eliminate it. As well as case studies

involving creative, forward-thinking solutions have proven real world results with collection system rehabilitation, replacement, and new construction to reach STEP areas.

Contaminants of Emerging Concern & Trace Organics

The control of emerging contaminants and trace organics in drinking water, wastewater, and recycled water is essential to protecting public health. Submissions should explore the occurrence, treatment, monitoring, and regulatory considerations of these constituents. They may address treatment technologies, the use of indicators or surrogates to evaluate treatment performance, scientific underpinnings of regulatory frameworks, and strategies for permit compliance involving unregulated or trace-level constituents. Additional areas of interest include wastewater surveillance for chemical contaminants, and the identification and assessment of chemical contaminants and trace organics.

Culture & Belonging and Service Equity

There are two sides to distributional inequity: communities that receive subpar levels of service and communities that benefit from exceptionalism. One lacks utility infrastructure, routine maintenance, and capital investment, while the other is provided with state-of-the-art facilities, upgrades, maintenance, and services exceeding standard levels of care. This topic highlights efforts to acknowledge the role of utilities in distributional inequity and/or efforts to redistribute services and resources via utility policies, plans and projects so that the most-under-served can also thrive.

Disinfection & Public Health

Disinfection is the most critical step in the treatment of water, wastewater and recycled water for the protection of public health. Submissions should address topics related to the management of waterborne pathogens and/or their nexus with public health, such as established and innovative disinfection practices, disinfection regulations and their scientific basis (including indicator organisms), disinfection permit compliance, disinfection byproducts, water sanitation, and hygiene, and wastewater surveillance.

Effective Utility Management

Effective utility management in the water and wastewater industry involves a holistic approach that integrates asset management, financial sustainability, and operational efficiency to ensure reliable service delivery and long-term infrastructure viability. This comprehensive strategy enables utilities to optimize resource allocation, mitigate risks, and adapt to evolving environmental and regulatory challenges while providing high-quality water and wastewater services to their communities.

Funding and Financing Water Infrastructure

Funding water infrastructure worldwide remains a major challenge under traditional financial models. State and federal agencies face increasing pressure to renew aging systems, upgrade and build new assets to meet population growth, enhance resilience to natural hazards, and address the impacts of climate change. To meet these needs, agencies must combine public and private funding sources to deliver 21st-century water infrastructure solutions. Submissions should explore the full range of traditional and emerging financing options for water infrastructure, provide expert insight

into the global and U.S. water infrastructure deficit, and highlight how public utilities have successfully leveraged private investment to deliver essential projects.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The water resource recovery industry plays a crucial role in managing and mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and carbon dioxide (CO₂). Submissions should address GHG quantification, modeling, online monitoring, and mitigation. Reducing direct GHG emissions across the liquid stream treatment processes, biosolids handling and collection system includes strategies such as optimizing operations or advanced process control. Effective monitoring and management of these emissions are essential for achieving sustainability goals and combating climate change.

Industrial Treatment (All topics related to industrial sites)

Water is essential for almost every industrial process and plays a key role in the Circular Water Economy. Inside industrial facilities, water is used for production, heating, cooling, cleaning, and managing waste. Beyond the facility, connecting water, energy, and resource cycles with local municipalities is crucial to achieving a sustainable, circular approach. Submissions should highlight innovative water treatment technologies in real-world full-scale use, how industrial activities affect the environment and municipal water systems, and the role of the Circular Water Economy across all industrial sectors.

Liquid Stream Treatment – Nutrient Removal and Recovery

Submission should address nutrient removal at municipal resource recovery facilities, including biological and chemical phosphorus removal and conventional, enhanced, and shortcut nitrogen removal. Nutrient recovery for phosphorus, nitrogen, and other materials using mainstream or sidestream treatment processes.

Liquid Stream Treatment Technology – Preliminary, Primary, and Wet Weather Treatment

Submissions should address preliminary and primary treatment for municipal resource recovery facilities, including influent and intermediate pumping, coarse and fine screening, grit removal, primary treatment, and flow equalization. This category also includes wet weather treatment systems planning and design such as advanced primary treatment, enhanced settling, step feed, and filtration processes.

Liquid Stream Treatment Technology - Secondary & Tertiary/Advanced Treatment

Submissions should address secondary, tertiary, and advanced treatment for municipal resource recovery facilities including conventional activated sludge, fixed-film and integrated media systems, membrane treatment systems, other types of intensification secondary treatment processes such as densification, tertiary filtration, advanced treatment technology for stringent effluent limits and reuse applications.

Odor Management

Odor Management is a critical aspect of water resource recovery in both the collection system and at the treatment facility, impacting public perception, regulatory compliance, and community relations. Submissions should address innovation in odor control and mitigation in municipal and industrial water environments. Topics of interest include advances in odor detection, monitoring, and assessment, treatment technologies and process modifications for odor reduction, community engagement and communication best practices, and integration of digital solutions and automation for odor control. Submission should showcase data-driven decision-making, collaborative approaches, and practical insights that can help facilities improve odor management and enhance environmental stewardship.

Optimization of Municipal Facility Operations

Efficient and resilient operation of municipal wastewater facilities is essential to protecting public health, supporting environmental sustainability, and meeting regulatory requirements. Submissions should address innovations, best practices, and challenges in the operation, optimization, and management of municipal wastewater treatment systems. Topics may include energy and resource recovery, operational resilience, and strategies for achieving permit compliance. Submissions that highlight data-driven decision-making, case studies, lessons learned, and collaborative approaches to improving facility performance are strongly encouraged.

Digital Solutions for Advance Process Control

Process automation and optimization of municipal wastewater treatment plants can involve the integration of advanced control systems, data analytics, and intelligent technologies to enhance operational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and sustainability. Submissions should address the development and application of machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI), and data-driven, hybrid, and mechanistic models that anticipate system behavior, optimize chemical dosing, minimize manual intervention, reduce energy consumption, and improve overall plant performance.

Project Delivery

Project delivery within the water and wastewater industry is characterized by the complex undertaking of designing, constructing, and rehabilitating critical infrastructure, often encompassing extensive networks of pipes, treatment plants, and pumping stations. This process is increasingly challenged by aging infrastructure, stringent regulatory requirements, and the need to accommodate population growth and climate change impacts. To address these complexities, the industry is increasingly adopting innovative delivery methods like design-build and progressive design-build, as well as leveraging advanced technologies such as digital twins, IoT sensors, and AI for more efficient and sustainable project execution.

Public Communications & Outreach

Public communications and outreach within the water and wastewater industry are crucial for fostering transparency, building trust, and educating communities about vital services. These efforts often involve sharing information on water quality, infrastructure projects, conservation initiatives,

and the value of water resources, ultimately empowering informed public participation and support for sustainable water management.

Small Communities, Decentralized Systems & Management

Small communities in the water and wastewater industry often benefit significantly from decentralized systems, which offer localized treatment and distribution solutions rather than relying on large, centralized infrastructure. Submissions should address effective management of these decentralized systems is crucial for ensuring public health, environmental protection, and long-term sustainability, as it requires tailored approaches to operation, maintenance, and regulatory compliance.

Stormwater

Stormwater management requires intentional planning to safely convey, capture, and treat stormwater. Effective management ensures public health and safety, along with improving habitat and ecosystem health. As climate change occurs and technology advances, understanding both the tried and true approaches and discovering the latest innovation provides stormwater managers a solid foundation for their program.

Water Reuse

As global demand for clean water rises, engineered water reuse is becoming increasingly vital. Water reuse refers to the process of treating wastewater or reclaimed water for beneficial purposes such as irrigation, industrial use, groundwater recharge, or even direct potable applications. This approach conserves freshwater resources, reduces environmental pollution, and supports sustainable water management by recycling water that would otherwise be discarded. Water reuse relies on a range of advanced treatment technologies which are designed to meet strict regulatory standards.

Watershed Management

Watershed management offers a comprehensive approach to water resource management that consider both water quantity and quality and the interactions between water, land, and human activities. Watershed management encompasses a wide variety of strategies including a One Water approach, Integrated Planning, watershed permitting (as opposed to point-source permitting), and watershed management case studies to define and refine these strategies. The case studies often document efforts to address green infrastructure, modeling, nutrients, and climate issues.

2026 Theme Topics:

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI is set to revolutionize water management by enabling utilities to optimize resource allocation, predict infrastructure failures, and address critical challenges like water scarcity and aging infrastructure. Embracing AI's disruptive technologies to enhance not only AI for water but water for AI is key to successfully navigating the AI landscape. By leveraging AI, water management professionals can strategically navigate complex challenges, transforming data-driven insights into innovative solutions that optimize resource allocation, predict and defend against infrastructure vulnerabilities, and advance global water sustainability efforts.

Circular Water

The circular water economy transforms how communities and industries manage water by reducing waste, recovering valuable resources such as nutrients and energy, and regenerating natural systems. Submissions should highlight practices that enable water reuse, resource recovery, watershed protection, and other such initiatives while driving economic and environmental durability across the water sector.

Global

Submissions to this theme should be of broad appeal to a global audience. The application of lessons learned should be applicable to a variety of situations and not hyper-specific.

Research and Innovation

This theme highlights breakthrough science in wastewater. It focuses on rigorous, data-driven applied research that generates new insights, validates novel concepts, or optimizes technologies. Topics may include pilot studies, lab evaluations, advanced modeling, and full-scale technology validation across areas such as nutrient removal, biosolids processing, emerging contaminants, energy recovery, and system resilience. Submissions should apply sound methodology to advance technical understanding.

Workforce

Submissions to this theme should highlight technical skills and talents and how they bridge the gap between innovative designs and real-world applications. Topics should emphasize technical expertise and common goals, and how professionals can integrate aged equipment with modern technologies while maintaining cost-efficiency and adhering to stringent regulations.