



Call for Listening Session Co-Hosts

Dec. 15, 2021

Opportunities for Community Input via Facilitated Discussion

If you are interested in becoming a co-host for a listening session to enable ERVA to connect with your stakeholders, please contact info@ervacommunity.org.

OVERVIEW

ERVA Mission

The Engineering Research Visioning Alliance (ERVA) seeks to identify and develop bold and transformative new engineering research directions and to catalyze the engineering community's pursuit of innovative, high-impact research that benefits society.

Listening Session Definition and Types

A listening session is a facilitated discussion similar to a focus group. Participants are asked to share their expertise and knowledge by responding to a series of prepared questions, as well as participating in open discussion.

ERVA will strategically engage the Nation's engineering community (as well as other interested parties) to gather information utilizing listening sessions throughout the country and virtually, leveraging:

- **existing on-site/hybrid/virtual events** (e.g., those of ERVA's core partners and Affiliate Partners, as well as other organizations) where ERVA representatives can meet with event participants;
- **co-organized regional events** on-site in regions that possess a critical mass of academic, corporate, government and non-profit representatives; and
- **special, co-organized virtual sessions** to broaden participation for those unable to travel to on-site events and to allow cross-region participation beyond existing partner member events.

Listening Session Co-Host Benefits

Listening sessions are a great way for professional societies, universities, non-profits, and regional stakeholders to directly impact the future of the American engineering research enterprise by convening a strategic set of thought leaders to identify new directions needing greater exploration from researchers from academic, corporate, and non-profit organizations.



Co-hosting an ERVA listening session will bolster your organization's reputation as a thought leader within the engineering research community and promote your organization as a driver of transformative research and collaboration. Co-hosts recommend speakers and content of interest; they also have the potential to deepen existing partner relationships and develop new ones. The resulting report will be shared with ERVA leadership, NSF, and the broader engineering research community to promote action around promising identified research directions.

Listening Session Goals

As a National Science Foundation (NSF)-supported initiative, ERVA is committed to obtaining continuous input and feedback on contemporary engineering research priorities and future directions. One mechanism by which ERVA proposes to obtain input across stakeholder groups is through listening sessions; these are designed to:

- ensure that the engineering community - from students to retirees - can share their insights on current and future research directions and priorities;
- help ERVA staff and leadership groups crowdsource ideas from individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences to ensure that input from individuals representing the entire Nation, as well as various disciplines and sectors, is incorporated into the ERVA process; and
- provide real-time input on emerging or long-term research opportunities.

DECISION CRITERIA

Overall Selection Criteria

ERVA is committed to holding at least 10 listening sessions in each of the coming years and will use these guidelines and criteria to select sessions while promoting inclusivity and ensuring participation of diverse voices.

- **Disciplines.** Listening sessions will be structured to ensure that myriad engineering disciplines have an opportunity to provide input on future research directions.
- **Geography.** ERVA is a national effort, and it is important that citizens across the Nation have an opportunity to participate without incurring significant costs (in time or money).
- **Sectors.** Cross-sector participation spanning academic, corporate, government, and nonprofit organizations is central to ERVA's objectives.
- **Participants.** Sessions seek to ensure that a critical mass of attendees will participate.
- **Session type.** ERVA will leverage a mix of existing on-site events (from core partners, Affiliate Partners, and/or other organizations), co-organized regional events, and virtual sessions to vary formats, increase participation opportunities, and to maximize crowdsourcing potential.

○ **Existing on-site/hybrid/virtual/events**

- **Core partners:** Each of ERVA’s core partners - the Big Ten Academic Alliance, the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)/Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Foundation (EIF), and the University Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP) - will co-host listening sessions at appropriate, major events.
- **Affiliate Partners:** ERVA’s valued Affiliate Partners are invited and encouraged to co-host listening sessions aligning with their standing, major events. This includes sessions as part of their program, or supplemental activities held before, during or after a meeting. Affiliate Partner sessions will be accepted based on alignment with overall criteria, balance of recent/planned ERVA listening session diversity, and availability of ERVA leadership to participate.
- **Other organizations:** Occasionally, as identified by ERVA leadership, ERVA may reach out on an *ad hoc* basis to organizers of other standing events within or outside of the standard call for session proposals to reach audiences beyond existing partners where a critical mass of engineering community stakeholders is gathering and whose voices will add a critical dimension.

○ **Co-organized regional events**

An online “Request to Co-Host” submission process will be available on ERVA’s main website with the submission opportunity announced via the ERVA Champions email distribution list and through ERVA’s core partners and Affiliate Partners. Academic, corporate, state and local governments, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to co-host a listening session. Preference will be given to proposals from multiple parties representing multiple sectors.

○ **Special, co-organized virtual sessions**

These will be invited on a case-by-case basis; the request may be initiated by ERVA or an entity outside ERVA’s existing partners.

GUIDANCE FOR EXISTING ON-SITE/HYBRID/VIRTUAL EVENTS

Logistics

- **Space/platform and timing.** Co-hosts should provide the physical space or virtual platform within the existing event’s regular program or during an adjacent time (e.g., during breakfast, evening after hours, break, or pre- or post-event workshop).
- **Length.** The length of these sessions can vary from 60 minutes to a half day based on desired outcomes, audience, and logistical limitations.
- **Preparation time.** Sessions should generally be planned with at least 60 days’ lead time to ensure appropriate levels of community awareness and communication.



- **Securing participants.** ERVA staff will collaborate with session partners to ensure that information on the activity is widely disseminated. For association meetings, this means inclusion in event materials and dedicated emails to attendees. NSF personnel will also be informed.

GUIDANCE FOR CO-ORGANIZED REGIONAL EVENTS

Logistics

- **Timing.** ERVA will work with the co-host to identify a mutually agreeable day for the event to be held.
- **Preparation time.** Sessions should be planned with at least 90 days' lead time to ensure appropriate levels of community awareness and communication.
- **Length.** The length of these sessions can vary from 90 minutes to a half day based on desired outcomes, audience, and logistical limitations.
- **Focus.** Sessions may be general or, upon mutual agreement of ERVA and the selected co-host, have a more specific focus in terms of content and/or participants (e.g., early career, broadening participation, focus on a specific research theme, etc.).

ERVA Responsibilities

- **Leadership.** Ensure that some ERVA leadership attend and contribute to program development.
- **Communications development.** Create a website and marketing materials to be used by ERVA and co-hosts to promote the event.
- **Registration.** Create and maintain an online registration system and track registrations.
- **Participant recruitment – within ERVA's network.** Identify participants from relevant sectors (academia, industry, government, and nonprofits) and invite ERVA community members (Standing Council, Advisory Board, Champions, and Affiliates) located within reasonable commuting distance.
- **Invitations.** Invite potential attendees identified by the co-host and ERVA.
- **Food and beverage.** Sponsor appropriate and allowable food and beverage such as breakfast, lunch, or coffee/snacks.
- **Report development and publication.** In collaboration with co-hosts, create an ERVA listening session report that captures key takeaways from the event discussion.

Regional Co-Host Responsibilities

- **Facility.** Offer a facility, at no cost to ERVA, that can hold approximately 100 attendees and includes any needed AV equipment and support.



- **Conveners.** Identify individuals at the appropriate level and possessing relevant experience to serve as session organizers to assist in program development and welcome everyone to the event.
- **Participant recruitment – regional stakeholders.** Identify potential attendees from the region (which can be defined in conjunction with the ERVA staff) to participate. Ensure representation from relevant sectors (academia, industry, government, and nonprofits) as well as diversity in reference to the focus, by discipline, career stage, gender, and race/ethnicity. ERVA will depend on co-hosts to follow up on invitations to representatives in their community to encourage participation.
- **Facilitators/annotators.** Provide facilitators and annotators to capture discussions at general and breakout sessions.
- **Report drafting.** Draft a report that captures key takeaways from the event discussion and work collaboratively with ERVA to refine and develop the report for publication.
- **Communications dissemination.** Distribute event materials to generate interest, including via organization communication channels and local press to cover open portions of the event and distribute the report to a broad audience to catalyze action.

General Resources for Conducting Listening Sessions

- [Community Listening Sessions | OHSU](#)
- [Six ways to run a listening session | NPR Training](#)
- [Chapter 3. Assessing Community Needs and Resources | Section 3. Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions | Main Section | Community Tool Box \(ku.edu\)](#)

About ERVA

The [Engineering Research Visioning Alliance \(ERVA\)](#) is a neutral convener that helps to identify and develop bold and transformative new engineering research directions, directly supporting the Nation’s ability to compete in a rapidly changing global economy. Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate for Engineering, ERVA is a diverse, inclusive and engaged partnership that enables an array of voices to impact national research priorities. The five-year initiative convenes, catalyzes and empowers the engineering community to identify nascent opportunities and priorities for engineering-led innovative, high-impact, cross-domain research that addresses national, global and societal needs.

Good Faith Statement

All information provided by ERVA is offered in good faith. Specific items are subject to change based on business circumstances. ERVA does not guarantee that any item is without error. ERVA will not be held responsible or liable for use of this information or for any claims asserted therefrom.